R. M. Townsend

# DISCOURSE
## CONCERNING
# Old-Age,
## TENDING TO
## The *Inſtruction, Caution* and *Comfort* of *Aged Perſons.*

Tit. 2. 2, 3. *That the Aged men be ſober, grave, temperate, ſound in Faith, in Charity, in Patience. The aged Women likewiſe,* &c.

Ben Syra. סבא בביתא סימנא טבא בביתא.

Πολλὰ γὰρ ἐ τρίχες λέυκαι, ἀλλὰ ψυχὴς ἀχμή. Chryſoſt. *in* Pſal. 50.

By *RICHARD STEELE*, M. A.
Miniſter of the Goſpel.

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# IMPRIMATUR,

*R. M. Apr.* 10. 1688.

# THE EPISTLE to the *Readers*.

Friendly *Readers*,

YOU *have here a plain Diſcourſe concerning* Old-age. *The* Deſign *of it is to* Inſtruct, *to* Warn, *and to* Comfort *the* Weaker *ſort of* Ancient *perſons, amongſt whom I muſt place* my ſelf. *The* Wiſer *and* ſtronger *may find divers things upon this* Subject *collected here* together, *which they have met with* aſunder, *and which they* know *and* practiſe *better than I. But that which* put *me upon this Attempt, was,* 1. *Some years* Experience *of* Old-age *in my ſelf.* 2. *More* Leiſure *by reaſon of my bodily* Infirmities, *and other* Reſtraints *than I could have deſired.* 3. *An* Obſervation, *that there was no* full Treatiſe *in our* Tongue *upon this* Point. 4. *And* laſtly, *an unfained* deſire *to be ſome way* uſefull *in the World. Theſe*



46

were the true Occasions of this Adventure. Whatsoever in it tasts of the cask, impute that to my weakness; whatsoever is worthy, ascribe it only to Gods Goodness. I know it is full of imperfections, but when the Principle, Matter, and End of an action are honest, Candid persons will interpret the rest in the best sence: Such Ancient and Modern Authors, I could meet with, as have written upon this Subject, I have perused, and digested their Observations in their places. But the Scriptures here produced are my great Vouchers, and which I do most earnestly recommend to the Readers, for they are worthy the highest Regard. That the Lord would enable me and you to frame our Old-age according to these Instructions, is the earnest Prayer of

Plutarch, Cicero, Seneca, Palæotus, Tossanus, Rivet, &c.

Your Servant for Jesus sake,

May 10. 1688.

*Richard Steele.*

THE

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## ERRATA.

PAge 41. *line* 4. *read* persons. p. 76. *l.* 2. *r.* pleased. p. 77. *marg. r.* laniant. p. 80. *l.* 27. *r.* as if *for* unless. p. 81. *marg. r.* cernere — corporis. p. 95. *marg. r.* senum. p. 110. *l.* 4. *r.* deprive. p. 117. *l.* 1. *r.* in *for* to. p. 140. *l.* 18. *r.* let him be useless *for* make away with him. p. 194. *l.* 20. *r.* Prov. p. 195. *marg. r.* honestissimum domicilium senectutis. p. 196. *l.* 4. *r.* Authority. p. 202. *marg. r.* ἐμπειρίας. p. 209. *marg. r.* molestè. p. 272. *l. ult. r.* self-willed. *Other literal Mistakes are left to be rectified by the Candid Reader.*

A

# DISCOURSE

CONCERNING

# Old-Age:

INtending a Diſcourſe concerning *Old-Age*, I ſhall uſe that *Method*, which I conceive will be moſt comprehenſive, and moſt commodious for my purpoſe; which is, 1. By making ſome *Deſcription* thereof. 2. By ſhewing the true *Cauſes* of it, and the beſt *Preſervatives* againſt it. 3. The *Sins* or *Vices* which are moſt uſual in it. 4. The *Graces* and *Vertues* that are moſt proper for it. 5. The *Inconveniences* and *Miſeries* which attend it. 6. The *Privileges* and *Comforts* peculiar to it. And Laſtly, the *Work* and *Buſineſs* that is moſt needful in it.

# CHAP. I.

## *The Deſcription of Old-age.*

### SECT. I.

§ 1. The Names for Old-age. עָתִיק · יָשִׁישׁ שֵׂיבָה זָקֵן

FOR the *Firſt*, we muſt come to a right Notion of *Old-age*, partly by its *Name*. The *Words* which are uſed for it in the *Oriental* Languages, do only ſignifie Perſons or Things that are *durable*, that have *laſted long*; And *ſome* of them are us'd promiſcuouſly for ſuch as are dignified by *Office*, as well as for ſuch as have *filled their Days*. And none of them do direct us in the *Computation*, when it begins; but do comprehend as well thoſe Perſons that are *decrepit*, as thoſe that are only *decayed*. For in *Gen.* 18.11. *Abraham* was an *Old Man*; and in *Gen.* 24. 1. there he is called with the very *ſame word*, but an *Old Man*, tho he was then *forty* years older than before. The *Hebrew* commonly calling an Old Man, one *full of days*, or *ſtricken in Years*, tho ſometimes they are diſtinguiſhed,

guished, *the aged with him that is full of days*, Jerem. 6. 11. by which it should seem, that *Old-age* comes somewhat short of *fulness of days* [b].

The *Greek* [c] words also for an *Old Man* do signifie one that hath *lived long*; or one that *looketh* towards the *Earth*; or whose vital *moisture* is *dried* away, and nothing but an earthy matter left. The *Latine* [d] words for *Old-age*, do signifie *multitude of years*, or *Decay* of strength: Or *Precedence* and *Priority* of Existence. But the most usual and proper *word* for it denotes a Person, who hath one Foot in the Grave, that is *half dead* already; tho *some* derive it from the Diminution of the *Senses*, as if no body were old, till they were decrepit and began to dote.

Our *English* word *Old* is of a *German* descent. The *High-Dutch* calling an Aged person, *Alt-man*. The *Saxons*, *Eald* or *Olt-min*; the *Low-Dutch*, *Oud-man*. All which *some* derive from the *Latines*, [e] *others* from the *Hebrews* [f]: but none of them affording us any light concerning the proper *Nature*, or distinct Time of Old-age; tho, in their native signification, it is likely they in some sort did express the *Thing* in question,

[b] *Senectus non est ætas ultima.* Hier. *in* Jer. 6.

[c] πρέσβυς παρὰ τὸ πρεσσῶς βεβιωκέναι. Γέρων παρὰ τὸ ἐις γὴν ὁρᾶν. *vel quasi* γηρός, *terrestris.* Aristot. *Vetus à* βουετὴς *vel quasi vietus.* i.e. *sine vi.*

[d] Antiquus *qui ante nos fuit.* Senex, *quasi seminex, semimortuus.*

[e] Alt. *quasi ætate altus.*

[f] *Vel à* עָלָה *alab, ascendere in altum.* Minshew.

It is clear, that there are divers *Periods* in the life of Man, which are like ſo many *Stages* in the *Race* which is ſet before us. Herein we have ſome light in the Holy *Scriptures*. In *Levit.* 27. 3, 4, *&c.* where *One Interval* of time is, from a *Month* to *Five* years of Age; a *Second*, from *Five* years of Age to *Twenty*; a *Third* from *twenty* to *ſixty*; and the *laſt* from *ſixty* to the *end of Life*. And mens *Strength* and Ability, at leaſt in thoſe *Times* and *Places*, may be collected from their *Valuation*, which is there adjuſted by *God* himſelf. Humane *Authors* have variouſly divided the Life of *Man*. Some into *Four* parts, anſwering the *four* parts of the *Year*; *Spring*, *Summer*, *Autumn*, and *Winter*. *Others* into *Seven*; aſſigning each part of it to a different *Planet*; and ſo *Old-age* to *Saturn*. But Man's *Age* ſeems moſt fitly to be diſtributed into, 1. His *Growing*. 2. His *Ripe* or conſiſtent, and 3. His *Decaying* Age.

As to the *Firſt* of theſe; we need not be ſo Critical, as to begin it at his Conception, or *Quickning* in the Womb, tho he doth then begin to live and to grow; ſith the *Holy Ghoſt* in the *Scripture* above-ſaid makes no reckoning of his Age, until he be a *Month* old.

Leaving

Leaving therefore that State of *Non-age*, we may diſtinguiſh his *Growing* Age into *Infancy*, *Child-hood* and *Youth*. *Infancy* ends when we begin to go and ſpeak. *Child-hood* reacheth to the fourteenth or fifteenth year; and *Youth* laſts to Twenty five. Unto theſe years we uſually increaſe in Strength or Stature. Not but that ſome particular Perſons, or in ſome *Countries* do ripen ſooner; and alſo that *Females* are reckon'd to attain to the *Second* Stage of their *Growing* Age, *two* years ſooner, and to the *third* Stage, *four* years ſooner than the *Males*; yet ſtill the foreſaid Computation agrees with the nobler Sex, and comprehends the Generality of them.

The *Ripe* Age of Man follows, when the *Parts* of his *Body*, and the *Powers* of his *Soul* are come to ſome *Conſiſtence*; and therefore it may be called his *Beſt* Eſtate, or as the *Hebrew* ſignifies in *Pſal.* 39. 5. his *ſetled Eſtate*: *Verily every man at his ſetled*, or *beſt Eſtate*, *is altogether Vanity*. The former is the *Spring*, this is the *Summer* of a mans life; wherein they who are truly wiſe, will be gathering both Temporal and Spiritual Proviſion for the *Winter* of Old-age [g]. Now this Rational *Flower* is in its prime.

[g] If Youth knew what Age would crave, It wouldbe ſure to get and ſave.

*As the Flower of the Field, ſo he flouriſheth*, Pſal. 103. 15. Many indeed are cropt and gathered in their Youth, and others are cut off in the midſt of their days: *for when the Wind paſſeth over* this Flower, *it is gone.* And it is obſervable, that *Enoch* in the *firſt* World, and *Elijah* in the *ſecond*, and our Dear Saviour in the *laſt*, were called away in the *midſt* of their days; to warn us, that this is not our Country, but that even in the time of Youth and Strength, it behoves us to prepare for another World. But if the Lord do ſtill by his Power and Patience, *hold our Soul in life*, and that His *viſitation do preſerve our Spirit*, this brings us to *Old-age*; and this *Ripe* Age commonly laſts as long as our *Growing* Age, and ſo we may aſſign unto it, *Twenty five* years more.

## SECT. II.

§ II. The Nature thereof.

AND ſo we are comen to the *Third* and *Laſt* Stage of Life, the *Decaying* Age or *Old-age*; which is the *Subject* of the following *Diſcourſe*; which may be thus deſcrib'd, namely, *That Part of Mans life, wherein through the Multi-*

*tude*

*tude of Years his Strength is decay'd* [h]. For, 1. It is not *meerly* ſuch a *number* of Years without ſome *Decay* of Nature, that can properly denominate *Old-age*; ſith in former times before the *Flood*, when men uſually lived *eight* or *nine hundred* years, he that was an *hundred* years old, was a very *Young* man; and ſtill we find that many are ſtronger at *ſixty*, than others are at *fifty* years of Age. Thus *Athanaſius* teſtifies of *Antony* the *Monk* in *Egypt*, that he had all his Teeth, and his Eye-ſight ſound, when he was an hundred and five years old. Neither, 2*ly*. Doth the *Decay* of *Strength* alone, determine a man Old; ſith *Diſeaſes* and other Caſualties may weaken and wither him, who in reſpect of his Age, hath not attain'd the *Meridian* of his Life. Thus our Bleſſed Saviour was gueſs'd to be near *fifty* years old, *Joh.* 8. 57. when he was but little paſt *Thirty*, being a *man of Sorrows*, and *acquainted with Grief*. But when our *Strength* is decayed [i] through the multitude of *Years*, then *Old-age* commenceth.

From whence it followeth, that neither *Gray-hairs*, nor *Wrinkles*, nor any ſuch ſeparable *Adjunct* can be a Demonſtration of *Old-age*; ſeeing Sickneſs, or Cares,

[h] *Vel, corporis temperamentum frigidum & ſiccum quod ſequitur quantitatem certorum annorum vitæ præteritæ.* Rivet.

[i] *Senectæ laſſæ non fractæ ætatis nomen eſt.* Sen. Ep. 26.

or Fears, or Grief may produce theſe Effects, without any conſiderable Decay of ſtrength, or Number of years, *Prov.* 12. 25. *Heavineſs in the Heart of man maketh it ſtoop.* Here the *Heart* ſtoops like an old man, and that through *heavineſs.* And *Pſal.* 6. 7. *Mine Eye is conſumed, becauſe of Grief, it waxeth Old, becauſe of all mine Enemies*; here *Grief* brings Old-age into the *Eye.* And *Pſal.* 32. 3. *When I kept ſilence, my Bones waxed Old*: here Old age is ante-dated in the *Bones* by trouble of Mind. Thus *Authors* tell us of thoſe, whoſe Hairs have become *hoary* by *Sickneſs*, and have grown black again at the return of Health [k]. And the *Story* of the *Dutch Captain* is famous, who being put into a Fright, had his Hair turned Gray in the ſpace of one Night. But all theſe being preternatural and accidental, do not conſtitute Old age at all.

[k] Ariſtot. *Hiſt. anim.* l. 3. c. 11. And *Caſſiodorus* ſaith, that *Seneca* was ſo call'd, becauſe he was born Gray. *Hoff. Lex.*

Neither doth any occaſional Eclypſe upon the *internal Faculties*, the *Mind*, *Memory* or *Phancy*, certainly declare *Old-age*; for many Accidents may produce theſe Effects in the youngeſt perſons: whereas *Old-age* is not incident to the Soul. Its Organs may be weakned or maimed either by *natural* Decays, or by *violent* Accidents,

dents, ſo that they cannot exert themſelves; but the *Soul* can never properly be ſaid to grow *old*, becauſe the nature of it is unperiſhable; and that which never *periſhes*, can never be ſaid to *decay*. But when *natural Heat* begins to abate, when no food can ſufficiently ſupply that *Radical Moiſture* in the Body, and when the *digeſtive* faculty is weakened; ſo that both the *Senſes* and *Members* begin to feel a *Decay*, then Old-age hath taken you by the hand, to lead you to your *long home* [l].

[l] *Senium eſt naturalis caloris tabes, mors extinctio,* Galen.

## SECT. III.

§. 3. The Beginning of Old-age.

NOW touching the preciſe *Year* wherein Old-age may be ſaid to begin, it is not ſo *material* to be known, as it is *doubtful* to be fixed. But if we allow *five* and *twenty* years to the *Growing* part of mans life, and reckon *five* and *twenty* years more to the *Ripe* or ſtaid part thereof, then doth *Old-age* ordinarily commence at *Fifty* years of age. And there or thereabout many *Learned* men [m] have fixt it, and then *five* and *twenty* years more will reach the *End* of moſt mens lives, or bring them

[m] *Seniores ab an°. 46 dicebantur,* Gell. *ab an°. 50 ad finem vitæ,* Keck. *Phyſ.*

them to *ſeventy five*, an age wherein commonly men grow every way impotent, and have one foot in the Grave. It's true, an univerſal *fixed* period cannot be ſet herein; the diverſity of mens natural Conſtitutions, Imployments, Diet, Exerciſes, *&c.* cauſeth Old-age to come *ſooner* to ſome, and *ſlower* to others. Some perſons through the happineſs of their *Deſcent*, have a better ſtock of *natural Heat*, and *radical moiſture* at their ſetting out than others, and conſequently *Old-age* being nothing elſe but the cold and dry temper of the Body, ſeizeth upon the perſon more ſlowly. Some peoples *imployments* do not ſpend or impair their *Vitals* ſo much as others. Some perſons are nouriſhed by more ſound and vigorous *Food*, than others are. In ſhort, a *Chearful Heart*, a *Sober Diet*, and *moderate Exerciſe*, may defer Old-age for a time; but come it will at length, even an Houſe of *Stone* will at laſt decay, and grow out of repair, *Job* 14. 19, 20. *The Waters wear the Stones: thou waſheſt away the things which grow out of the Duſt of the Earth, and thou deſtroyeſt the hope of Man. Thou prevaileſt for ever againſt him, and he paſſeth, thou changeſt his Countenance and ſendeſt him away.*

As

As for the *Progreſs* of *Old-age*, there be *ſome* that make a *Firſt*, *Second* and *Third* part thereof[n], but they undertake not, or elſe agree not to determine preciſely their reſpective periods. But this is plain, that there is a *Vigorous*, and a *Decrepit* Old-age. During the *Former*, natural Abilities are not ſo decayed, as to render a Man uneaſie, or unſerviceable. *Abraham* was an elderly man, *Gen.* 18. 11. He was *Old and well ſtricken in years*, Gen. 24. 1. being then about *one hundred* and *forty* years of Age: but *Gen.* 25. 8. He *was Old and full of years*, being *one hundred ſeventy* and *five*, then he was very Old. Thus *Jacob* was an Old man at *one hundred and ſeven* years, for *Benjamin* is called a *Child of his Old-age*, *Gen.* 44. 20. But he lived *Forty* years after that, *Gen.* 47. 28. But then he was a very Old-man; his Eyes were dim for Age, and he was confin'd to his Bed. In the *former part* of *Old-age*, many injoy a good Conſiſtency of Mind and habitude of Body; whereby they are very comfortable in themſelves, and very capable of Counſelling and Governing others: Yea, upon ſome accounts it may be eſteemed the *beſt* parcel of our Life; wherein our impetuous *Paſſions* being already

[n] The *Rabbins* indeed begin the firſt at 60. the ſecond at 70: and the third at 80. Galen. *de Sanit: tuend.* c. 12. זקנה שיבה

ready spent, we are furnished by great *experience* to be very useful in our Generation. But when a Man is arrived at the latter part of *Old-age*, to be impotent and decrepit, then he grows uneasy to himself, and unserviceable to others. These days may be called *Evil days*, and of these *years* it may be said, *I have no pleasure in them*, Eccles. 12. 1.

## SECT. IV.

§ 4. The long lives of divers.

THE *last* Period of Old-age is *Death*: Some indeed have been *longer* 'ere they tasted of Death, and some *sooner*; there is no certain definite year, wherein that last friendly Enemy comes. • The *Antediluvians* lived *eight* or *nine hundred* years. Those which were born *after* the *Flood*, did scarce live half so long; for *Arphaxad*, who was born after it, lived but 440 years, *Gen* 11. 13. And in the time of *Peleg* his Grand-child, the Age of man was shrunk *half in half* shorter; he lived only 239 years, *Gen.* 11. 21. And in the Age of *Nahor*, great Grand-child to *Peleg*, it fell to 150. *Gen.* 11. 25. And so the ordinary term of mans life was by degrees curtail'd, that in

• *Omnium aetatum certus est terminus, senectutis autem nullus certus est.* Cicer. *de sen.*

in *Moſes* time, the dayes of his years were reckon'd at *threeſcore* years and *ten*; and the ſtrongeſt conſtitutions did reach but to *fourſcore* years, *Pſal.* 90. 10. Howbeit, there have been in all ages of the world, ſome *Inſtances* of ſuch as have exceeded the ordinary ſtandard; the *cauſes* and *ends* whereof are known only to God, *in whoſe hand is the ſoul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind*, Job 12. 10. Thus we read of many in the *Primitive* times of Chriſtianity that lived on mean Food, and yet overpaſſed an *hundred* years; and *Rivet* in the end of his *Epiſtle* to his *Brother* concerning Old-age, makes a Relation of the pious life and remarkable Death of *Jacobus Faber Stapulenſis*, who *An.* 1538. died above an *hundred* years of Age. Yea *Euſebius* [p] aſſures us, that *Narciſſus* Biſhop of *Jeruſalem* attained to an *hundred ſixty and ſix* years. Our late *Geographers* [q] alſo tell us of the *Brazilians*, that they live commonly to 150. years, and that free from diſeaſes. *Fran. Alvarez* affirmeth, that himſelf ſaw an *Ethiopian Biſhop* who was an *hundred* and *fifty* years of age. And I have read that in one region of *Italy* there were found upon a ſurvey,

[p] *Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccl.* lib. 6. c. 10.

[q] *Sanſon*, p. 485.

Fifty

Fifty four perſons of 100. years of age. Fifty ſeven of 110. Two of 125. Four of 130. and Three of 140. [r] Yea *Fern. Lopez* the *Portugal* Kings Hiſtoriographer, gives a relation of an *Indian*, who upon clear evidence was found to have lived *Three hundred* and *forty* years: and of another *Indian Prince*, who was ſeen by *M. D' Ottigni*, and had lived *Two hundred* and *fifty* years [s].

Thus *Anacreon* in *Pliny* [t] relates of one *Arganthonius* King of the *Tarteſſians*, and the like of *Tullius Fullonius* of *Bononia*, that lived an *hundred and fifty* years; of *Cinyras* who lived an *hundred* and *ſixty*; of *Ægymius* that lived *two hundred*. And *Hellanicus* in the ſame *Author* affirmeth, that divers in *Ætolia* lived *two*, and ſome *three hundred* years. In *Greece*, *Neſtors* age became a kind of *Proverb*, attaining to *three hundred* years. And *Sabellicus* tells of divers in *Arabia*, who lived *four hundred* years. Famous is the Inſtance of *Johannes de Temporibus*, who bore arms under *Charles* the *Great*, *An.* 800. and was alive in the reign of *Conrade* 3. *A°.* 1124. having lived *three hundred ſixty* and *one* years. And in latter times *Maffeus* tells us, in his *Indian* Hiſtories of *One* in the laſt age

[r] *See* Tho. *of* Ravenna *who* A°. 1553. *wrote a book wherein he relates in one* Chapter *of ſuch as had lived in that age above* 120. *years.*

[s] Dr. Hakewells *Apol.* l. 3. c. 5.

[t] *Plin.* hiſt. *lib.* 7. *c.* 48.

ge but one, that lived *three hundred thirty and five* years, whoſe teeth had ſeveral times faln out, and new ones came in their ſtead, his *hoary* hairs returning by degrees to *black* again.

There have been alſo in our *Age* and *Countrey* many Inſtances of ſuch as have attained to an extraordinary Age. In *Northumberland* an *Old Miniſter* of Gods Word, called *Mr. Michael Vivon*, who in the year of our *Lord*, 1657. being then *one hundred* and *ten* years of age, had within *two years* time before, three young teeth ſprung up; and though for the ſpace of *forty* years before, he could not read the largeſt Print without Spectacles; yet afterwards he could read the ſmalleſt without them, having alſo new hair come upon his head, and had *five* children after that he was *fourſcore* years old. And it is but *Ao.* 1635. that *Thomas Parr* died in *London*, who had lived in the Countrey above *one hundred and fifty* years; In all 152. years and nine months. Yea there were two Brothers and a Siſter, *Richard Green*, *Philip Green*, and *Alice*, who lived but a while ago not far from *Marlborough*, that were alive together, and each of them above an *hundred*

*dred* years old; the laſt of them, which was *Richard*, dying about *A°.* 1685. at an *hundred* and *fifteen* years of age. And a modern *Hiſtorian* [a] of our own tells us, that A°. 1588. one *James Sands* of *Harbourn* in *Staffordſhire* died, aged *one hundred* and *forty*, his wife alſo being 120. And produces ſeveral others, that lived to ſee their Grand-childrens Grand-children.

[a] Dr. Plot. *Nat. hiſt. of* Staffordſh. *c.* 8.

Yea, even *Women*, though the weaker Sex, yet have ſometimes ſurvived unto a great Age. The *Scripture* relates, that *Sarah Abrahams* wife lived 127. years, *Geneſ.* 23. 1. the onely woman whoſe Age is recorded in the *Book of God*. *Pliny's* Note of *Terentia Ciceroꝰs* wife that lived an *hundred* and *three* years, or of *Clodia* that lived an *hundred* and *fifteen*, is rendred inconſiderable by examples of our own. For it is recorded of Dame *Heſter Temple* of *Stow* in *Buckinghamſhire*, who having four Sons and nine Daughters, lived to ſee *ſeven hundred* extracted from her own body. And the inſtance of holy *Miſtris Honywood* of *Kent* is well known, who lived to ſee *Three hundred* of her offspring alive together: and both theſe muſt needs be *full of dayes*. Yea, it was

was but about *Ao.* 1670. that one Mrs. *Pyfield* died in *Ireland*, who had lived *one hundred thirty* and *ſix* years. But the R. H. the late *Counteſs of Deſmond* exceeds all late examples in theſe Countries; who, when ſhe was an *hundred* and *forty* years old, had a ſet of young teeth, and was able to walk many miles, who died within our memories, being, as it is credibly affirmed, an 184. years old.

In all which *Inſtances*, as the ſtrength of *Nature* was great, ſo the Power and Goodneſs of the *God of Nature* was greater; to the honour whereof I have Collected and mention'd them: not that any of us ſhould deferr our Repentance or any Good Work, upon an expectation of arriving at the like term of Life; ſith an *hundred thouſand are dead* and rotten, for one that reach ſuch Longevity.

# CHAP. II.

## *The* Cauſes *of* Old-age, *and* Preſervatives.

### SECT. I.

*Cap.* 2. The Cauſes of Old age.

HAving thus Deſcribed *Old-age*, and ſelected ſome of the moſt eminent *Examples* thereof, I come now in the *Second* place, to inquire into the true *Cauſes* of it, and *Preſervatives* againſt it. For the *Cauſes* thereof.

§. 1. The Original cauſe of Old-age.

Firſt, the *Original* meritorious *Cauſe* is *Mans Sin* and *Defection* from God. The truth is, it may ſeem ſomewhat ſtrange, that Man being created at the firſt in the *Image* of the Immortal God, placed but *little lower than the Angels*, *crowned with glory and honour*, and made Ruler over all other creatures, ſhould have his life burdened with ſo many ſorrows, and then ſo ſoon arrive at *Old-age* and *Death*. And ſome of the *Heathens* did fooliſhly charge *Nature* with Envy and Cruelty towards Man, in

in cauſing ſo noble a creature to tarry ſo ſhort a time in the world, and to grow old as ſoon as he begins to grow ripe; And *Others* as wiſely concluded, that Men were ſent into this world only for their Puniſhment, for crimes committed in *other Bodies* before. And indeed, if you ſet the *Scriptures* aſide which reſolve the Caſe, it is ſomewhat unaccountable to have ſo ſhort an *Hiſtory* of ſo noble a creature. If a curious *Architect* ſhould frame and rear up a firm and ſtately pile of *Building*, and being compleatly furniſhed, the ſame ſhould preſently ſhrink, and in a ſhort time decay and fall to the ground; Paſſengers would be apt to call in queſtion the *fidelity* or *skill* of him that made it; or exceedingly wonder by what means it came to ruine, till they come to know, that the *Inhabitant* himſelf undermin'd, pluck'd down, or fir'd his own houſe: So in the *Caſe* before us, it is matter of grief and aſtoniſhment to ſee the moſt exquiſite piece of Gods workmanſhip upon earth, to become decrepit in ſo ſhort a ſpace, and to be reduc'd ſo ſoon into *duſt and aſhes.*

We muſt know therefore, that Man

at his *firſt Creation* being made up of a Body and a Soul, was neither in his own nature ſo unchangeable and immortal as the *Angels*, nor ſo frail and weak as other *creatures* below. Not ſo unchangeable, I ſay, in his *own nature*; for having a *body* that was to be continually ſupplied with food, that is, repair'd, it follows that, that which needs *repair*, is liable to *decay*; but yet while the ſweet harmony, wherein it was firſt form'd, was not diſturb'd, the frame might well have indured for a long time; eſpecially, if the *Tree of Life* in *Eden* were intended, as ſome of the *Learned* * thought, to ſupport, ſtrengthen, and perpetuate Life. But the diſmal *Fall* of our firſt *Parents* did ſo cruſh the *Body*, and wound the *Soul*, that neither of them can be recovered in this Life. For immediately that *Death*, which was threatned to him, by degrees ſeized upon his *Body*; and fear, ſhame and ſorrow entred into his *Soul*. And though the divine *Providence* permitted Him and divers of his poſterity to live many *hundreds* of years, that the naked world might be peopled, and that *Religion* with all other uſeful *knowledge* might be procur'd, preſerv'd and propagated in

* *Vivebat homo in Paradiſo ſicut volebat; quamdiu volebat quod* Deus *juſſerat: cibus aderat, ne eſuriret; potus ne ſitiret, lignum vitæ ne illum ſenectus diſſolveret.* Auguſt *de Civ. Dei.* c. 26.

in the world; yet we date his *decaying* and *dying* ſtate from that word, *Gen.* 3. 19. *For duſt thou art,* and *unto duſt ſhalt thou return.* That righteous Sentence brings our hoary hairs upon us. *Thou turneſt man to deſtruction,* and *ſayeſt, Return ye children of men* —— In *the morning they are like graſs which groweth up. In the morning it flouriſheth and groweth up,* in *the evening it is cut down and withereth. Pſal.* 90. 3, 6. If you inquire therefore into the ruines of humane nature, the anſwer will be, that *Sin* is the *moth,* which, being bred therein, hath fretted the garment, withers the man, and layes his honour in the duſt. Every decay therefore of our Strength ſhould mind us of our *Apoſtacy* from God by the *Fall,* and ſhould renew our grief for the ſame. Whether *Adam* wept as oft as he looked towards *Paradiſe,* is uncertain; but ſurely when we find our Eye-ſight fail us, our Skin to wrinkle, and the *pillars of the houſe* to tremble, we ſhould mourn for that woful Diſobedience and Ingratitude, which was the Original cauſe of the decayes of Nature. When your *Eyes* cannot do you ſervice in *Seeing,* let them do it in *Weeping* for this *root* of ſin and miſery.

Say not, that you are unconcern'd in what was done by *another*, time out of mind. For certainly we ſhould never feel the *effects*, which we daily find to our ſmart, if we had no hand in the procuring *cauſe* of them. They who would perſwade you, that no ſin is *inherent* in you, but that its only contracted by *imitation* and *cuſtome*, muſt needs yield that the *Decayes*, the *feebleneſs* and the *Dyſcraſy*, even of the temperateſt man in the world, muſt proceed from ſome wound upon humane nature, which the *Creator* would never have inflicted without a fault. O therefore let us not only lament our *Actual* and daily offences, but let us go up to the *Spring*, and bewail that firſt rebellion, which is the *root* of evil both of ſin and puniſhment. I ſay again, when thy *bones* ake, and when thy *hand* ſhakes, let thy *heart* mourn for the Sin that hath poyſon'd thy nature, and made thee miſerable. The body which was the *Inſtrument* in the crime, is juſtly the *Subject* in the puniſhment.

SECT.

## SECT. II.

§ 2. The Natural cauſe of Old-age.

THE *Second* which is the *Immediate* and *Natural* Cauſe of Old-age, is the *Dryneſs and Coldneſs* of the *Temperament* of the Body. There is according to the Old Philoſophy, a certain Native Heat and Radical Moiſture ingenerated in all mankind at their Conception, whereby Life is preſerved: The one is like the *Flame*, the other like the *Oyl* that feeds it. Diſeaſes and Diſaſters are like a *Thief* in the Candle, that makes it waſt the ſooner: but if no ſuch thing happen, yet the Lamp will conſume, and at laſt extinguiſh. All the ſupplies of *Food* and *Phyſick*, are not able to maintain nor repair that *Heat* nor that *Moiſture*, but a *cold* and *dry* temper grows upon the Body, till it be quite exhauſt and waſted.

It is true, *ſome* there be who have derived to them from their *Progenitors*, a greater meaſure of radical *Heat* and *Moiſture*, and therewith more lively and vigorous Spirits; and theſe, meeting with no *external Inconveniences*, do continue longer in their ſtrength, as may be obſerved

ſerved in ſome *Families* every where: as ſome generous *Wines* will preſerve themſelves from decay much longer than others; but at length they grow acid and ſpiritleſs: ſo in tract of time that *Moth* of *Mortality*, which lurks in all our Bodies, will fret that Garment into Rags. Things which are *Compounded* muſt *diſſolve*; contrary *Qualities* in the ſame *Subject*, tho never ſo equally temper'd, will work out one another. No care or Art can preſerve theſe *Houſes of Clay*, for as much as *their foundation is in the Duſt*, Job 4. 19.

## SECT. III.

§. 3. The Preternatural Cauſes of Old-age.

THE *Third* ſort of *Cauſes*, which may be termed *Preternatural* and *Adventitious*, that do accelerate or haſten *Old-age*, ſome of them are ſuch as theſe.

1. *Unwholſome Air.* For the *Air*, being the conſtant Food of the *Vital* parts, muſt needs contribute much to the Repair or Decay of the *Body*; and the more impure it is, muſt conſequently impair and weaken it. Hence and from the Corruption of *Food* it is not improbable,

bable, that the Age of Man, after the *Deluge* became ſo much diminiſhed; inſomuch as *Arphaxad*, who was the *firſt-born* in the *New World*, lived ſcarce half ſo long as thoſe before the *Flood*; as appears by comparing, *Gen.* 5. 27. with *Gen.* 11. 13. the Air being now become more impure and unwholſome, than it was before. However it is moſt evident, that people do commonly at this day grow weak, crazy and impotent, who live in thoſe places, which mourn under a malignant *Air*; and others are freſh and luſty at the ſame years, that injoy the bleſſing of a purer breathing.

2. Secondly, *Diſeaſes* are another *Cauſe* that brings on *Old-age*. For theſe muſt needs weaken that ſtrength of Nature, whereby our life is ſupported, *Pſal.* 39. 11. *When thou with rebukes doſt correct man for Iniquity, thou makeſt his Beauty to conſume away like a Moth*: and not only his *Beauty*, but his *Strength* and Spirits, for the *Hebrew* runs there, —*Thou makeſt that which is deſirable in him to melt away.* And thus it was with holy *Job*. *Thou haſt filled me with wrinkles, which is a witneſs againſt me*, Job. 16. 8. His grievous *Diſtempers* had made him old before his time. Thus we daily ſee divers perſons, who

who, in reſpect of the *number* of their years, have not paſs'd the *Meridian* of their Age, yet by reaſon of their *Sickneſſes*, and eſpecially the Dregs which ſome kinds of them do leave behind them, are old in their very Youth. Theſe are like *Storms* without, which battering the beſt built Houſe, will the ſooner bring it unto ruin. Holy *David* ſaid of himſelf, *Pſal.* 119. 83. *I am become like a Bottle in the Smoak*, that is, my natural moiſture is dryed, burnt up, and withered. And *Hezekiah* by reaſon of *ſickneſs* complains, *Mine Age is departed*, and *is removed from me as a Shepherds Tent*, Iſa. 38. 12. Thus the *Lord* doth ſometimes *weaken a mans ſtrength in the way, and ſhortneth his days*, Pſal. 102. 23. implying, that a mans life is like a *Journey* through this into a another World; now by *Diſeaſes* he *weakens us in the way*, as we are travelling through the World, cauſes us to commence *Old per ſaltum*, and ſhortens our days: ſo that by this means, ſome have but a *winters day* of life, while others injoy a *longer*.

3. Thirdly, Another *Cauſe* which haſtens Old-age, is, *immoderate Care or Labour*. Each of theſe, when they exceed a due proportion, do exhauſt the Spirits, and

and produce early wrinkles; whenas, being moderately uſed, they do us no hurt, but good. It is indeed a part of the *Curſe* pronounced at the *Fall*, on *Adam* and all his poſterity, *Gen.* 3. 19. *In the ſweat of thy face ſhalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground*; and the carking Heart and ſweating Face, haſtens man to the Ground. One of theſe alone, immoderate *Care*, or immoderate *Labour* will do the work; but when the mind within is eaten up by continual thoughtfulneſs, and the Body without is harraſt with extreme Labours, no wonder that Weakneſs, Languiſhment, and Old-age haſten on apace: [x] then doth our ſtrength give place to *labour* and *ſorrow*, *for it is ſoon cut off, and we fly away*, Pſal 90. 10. Great indeed is mens folly thus to ruin themſelves; ſith it is certain that neither our immoderate *cares*, nor our immoderate *labour*, do us any good at all: leſs *Care* and more *Prayer* would avail us much more; yea, and they do us much hurt, they diſquiet the Mind, they diſturb the Body, they provoke *God* to leave us to our ſelves; and then we ſhall ſoon find, that it is *vain to riſe early*, to *ſit up late*, and *to eat the Bread of Sorrow*: whereas the *bleſſing of*

x Αἶψα γὰρ ἐν κακότητι βροτοὶ καταγηράσκουσιν. *Heſiod.* Op. & Di. l. 1.

*of the Lord*, it *maketh rich, and he addeth no Sorrow with it*, Prov. 10. 22. Aſſure your ſelves, if moderate care and labour will not bring in Riches, then they are not good for you; and whatſoever is gained otherwiſe, hath a Curſe in it, and will bring miſery on the Body, or on the Soul, here or hereafter.

4. A *Fourth Cauſe* which haſtens *Old-age*, is *Intemperance*, that is, exceſs in *Eating*, or in *Drinking*, or in *luſtful Embraces*. Any of theſe, eſpecially the *laſt*, do bring Old-age into youthful years. Sad it is, that our Life being in its utmoſt extent ſo ſhort, and our Bodies by nature ſo frail; we, that have a deſire to live, and who for that end will be content to uſe the moſt irkſome remedies, ſhould yet ſo commonly invite diſtempers by our *Luxury*, and ſo ſhamefully dig our Graves with our Teeth, and deprive our ſelves of the reſidue of our years. In ſo much, that altho in St. *Hieroms* time he affirmed, that there were reckoned *five thouſand Martyrs* for every day in the Year, ſave one, yet we may ſadly conclude, that *Bacchus* and *Venus* have had daily more *Martyrs*, if we may ſo call them, in one place or other of the World, than *Jeſus Chriſt*. In this ſenſe doth *Se-*

*neca*

*neca*[y] truly ſay, *Non accepimus brevem vitam, ſed fecimus.* From whence come for the moſt part thoſe pains of the Gout, Stone, Dropſy, Convulſions and Apoplexies, with ſuch other Diſtempers, but from Intemperance in ſome of the foreſaid Objects? A moderate uſe of Meat, Drink, and conjugal rights, as it doth tend much to the alacrity of the mind, ſo doth it no leſs to the Health of the Body: but *exceſs* in any of them, doth either *ſuffocate* Nature, or elſe *impoveriſh* and exhauſt it; as it is obſerved of the more lecherous Creatures, that they are ſhort-liv'd in compariſon of others.

[y] *De Brevit. vit. cap. 1.*

If therefore you would arrive at a *good Old-age*, good in reſpect of the comfort of the Mind, or in reſpect of the welfare of the Body, oppoſe and check your unruly Appetites[z]; reſolve with the Grace of *God*, *Hitherto thou ſhalt come and no further*: conclude, I am a Man, yea, a Chriſtian, and not a Brute; and conſequently, am not to be guided by Senſe, but by Reaſon and Religion, which teach me to uſe all theſe outward comforts, ſo far as they will promote the Glory of my Maker, and the preſent and future good of my Body and Soul.

[z] *Pone gulæ metas, ut ſit tibi longior ætas. Eſſe cupis ſanus? ſit tibi parca manus.*

5. *Fifthly*, *Inordinate Paſſions* of the *mind*

*mind* are another means to bring on *Old-age*; ſuch as *Anger*, eſpecially *Sorrow*. For theſe do manifeſtly prey upon the Spirits, and alſo produce ſuch bodily Diſtempers, as do hurry people into *Old-age* before their time. [a] Hence it was, that *Valentinian* the *Emperor*, by an exceſſive ſtraining of his Voice, in an angry reply againſt ſome Offenders, fell into a grievous *Fever*, which at length brought him to his End. And for *Sorrow*, the *wiſeſt* of men tells us, *Prov.* 15. 13. *A merry Heart maketh a chearful Countenance; but by Sorrow of the Heart, the Spirit is broken* [b]. And when the Spirit is broken, the Body muſt ſenſibly waſt and decay. For theſe *Paſſions* like a *Torrent* or *Land-flood* break down, and overthrow all before them: you know a *River*, while it proceeds with its uſual ſtream, paſſes harmleſly, yea, profitably through all the Fields and Meadows, and makes no breaches on the Banks on either ſide; but when a ſuddain and exceſſive *Rain* ſwells it up, then it lays about it without mercy, and tears up the Ground, the Fences and Trees on every ſide: And even ſo our *Paſſions* being moderate, are innocent and uſeful; but he that hath *no rule over his own Spirit*, is like a Flood of Water broke looſe, or

[a] *Nihil eſt quod ſenectuti magis nocet ac dies hominis abbreviat, quam triſtitia, languor animi, & ira. Nihil enim bilari ſenectute jucundius.* Caſſ.

[b] 'Tis mirth that nurſeth life and blood, Far more than wine, or reſt, or food.

or like a *City that is broken down, and without Walls.*

Yea, there have been *Inſtances* of ſuch, as by ſudden *Grief* have grown Gray in a few days time; and there be *hundreds* that carry the Badge of their great Sorrows on their *Heads*, long before a due courſe of years would have brought them.

Let us not therefore ſuffer theſe *Vultures* to feed upon our Hearts, nor yield our ſelves Slaves to theſe unruly *Paſſions*; which war not only againſt the Soul, but even againſt the Body, and will ruin both, except they be reſtrained and mortified by the *Grace of God.* Philoſophy hath gone far in this work, *God* forbid but that *Chriſtianity* ſhould go much further.

There are alſo other both *Moral* and *Natural Cauſes* of *Old-age*, but theſe may ſuffice. The curious may ſatisfie themſelves elſewhere [c]. And by theſe *Cauſes*, you may eaſily diſcern what are the beſt *Preſervatives* againſt *Old-age.* For tho no Art or Care can prevent the unavoidable acceſs thereof, yet effectual *Means* may be uſed to deferr it. 'Tis true, *Galen* tells [d] us of a *Philoſopher*, who affirm'd, that there was a way to prevent it, and wrote a Book of it, when he was *forty years*

[c] See *Ro. Bacons* cure of old age, with Dr. *Browns* Notes.

[d] *Lib. de marcore. c. 2*

*years* old; but the ſaid Author] takes notice, that when he was arriv'd to *eighty*, he was waſted to skin and bones, and could not any way cure himſelf. But the moſt effectual *Preſervatives*, are, 1. *Piety*, and 2. *Sobriety*.

## SECT. IV.

§ 4. The Preſervatives of Old-age.

1. FIrſt, *ſerious Piety*. By which I mean, a Courſe of life in the Faith, and Fear of God, and in holy Obedience unto him. This is that *Godlineſs*, *which hath the promiſes of the life that now is*, as well as *of that which is to come*, 1 Tim. 4. 8. This is the beſt *Antidote* againſt that *Poyſon* which hath originally infected our Nature, and which makes it ſwarm with Diſtempers, that hurry us to *Old-age*, and *Death* at laſt. This is, certainly, the beſt *Means* whereby to avoid that fatal *Curſe* ſo early pronounc'd, or elſe to turn it into a *Bleſſing*. If *thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my Statutes and Commandments, then I will lengthen thy days*, 1 King. 3. 14. *What man is he that deſireth Life; and loveth many days, that he may ſee good? Depart from evil, and do good*, &c. Pſal. 34. 12, 14. It is the obſervation

ſervation of *Hierom* [e], and of *Origen* [f] before him, that *Abraham* is the firſt perſon called Old in the Scripture, tho *Adam* and *Methuſelah* and many others were richer than he in years, but not in Faith and Obedience. I know, that ſome of the worſt of men have, without this, flouriſhed long, and ſome that have been moſt *Religious*, have withered quickly; and therefore do conclude, that all ſuch *Outward bleſſings* and *afflictions* are *conditionally* promis'd and threatned: and yet it abides certain, that the *ordinary* way to a vigorous *Age*, and a long Life, is the true fear of God; and that which makes it ſhort and miſerable, is *Ungodlineſs*. And the *Holy Scripture* is expreſs herein, *Prov.* 10. 27. *The fear of the Lord prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked ſhall be ſhortned.* For doubtleſs, *our Lord God*, who is the giver of Life, is alſo the *Conſerver* of it; and whoſe word we may rely upon, as the beſt Preſcription and Preſervative in this caſe. This Holy courſe doth contribute to this end

1. In a *Natural* way. And that, 1. By Mortifying and diſcarding thoſe *Sins* which do more directly hurt the Body. Such are thoſe *Paſſions* and *Exceſſes* abovenamed, ſuch is *Anger*, *Envy*, *Covetouſneſs*,

[e] Hier. Pſal. 91. *unde videtur nomen hoc ſanctis non longæ ætatis ratione ſed authoritatis aſcribi.*

[f] Orig. in Gen. 18.

*ness*, *Ambition*, and many such like, which like wind in the Intrails of the Earth do rend and shatter it. I think there is no Sin, whatsoever, but it hath a malignant influence upon the Body; either to disorder and inflame it, or to macerate and dispirit it: Now the *Fear of God* obliges a man not only to *restrain*, but to *pluck up* all such by the Roots. Those are the *Weeds*, which both rob the sweet Flowers of their nourishment, and also depauperate the soil where they grow; which being cast out, the whole man fares the better after them. And 2. True Piety refresheth the Body with the *Comforts* of a *good Conscience*. That Peace, that Hope, that Joy which result from a Conscience, that is pacifi'd by the Blood, and purified by the Spirit of *Christ*, do most efficaciously cherish the whole man, they daily feast him. This is that *merry Heart*, that is called a *continual feast*, Prov. 15. 15. And that *doth good like a Medicine*, Prov. 17. 22. There is that *Intimacy* between the Soul and the Body, that whatsoever refresheth the *one*, doth also cheer the *other*. Whereupon the *Learned* have judged, that *Hope*, *Love* and *Joy* are great prolongers of *Life*, by the influence which these have upon the Humours

Humours and Spirits in the Body: much more when these Affections have heavenly and eternal things for their Object: and the *Holy Scripture* speaks that way, when it saith, *Prov.* 19. 23. *The fear of the Lord tendeth to Life, and he that hath it, shall abide satisfied.* 3. True Piety is the best Preservative against Old-age in a *Spiritual* way, to wit, by Procuring the *Blessing* of God. For when the Body is consecrated to him, and imployed for him, we may expect it to be blessed by him; it is under his peculiar care and Providence. When it is united to *Jesus Christ*, it will receive influence from *Him* for its good. So that *true Religiousness*, tho it more immediately tend to the recovery and felicity of the *Soul*, yet it is really most friendly also to the *Body*. He that *feareth God*, and *walketh in his ways*, *shall see his Childrens Children*, Psal. 128. last. And on the other hand, all those destroying, and life-shortning Diseases mention'd, *Deut.* 28. 27. 61. even *every sickness*, and *every plague*, are denounced to the ungodly. And fully *Eccl.* 8. 12, 13. *Tho a Sinner do Evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him. But it shall not be well with the wick-*

*ed, neither ſhall he prolong his days, which are as a ſhadow, becauſe he feareth not before God.* Therefore you that would *protract* the time of your flouriſhing ſtrength, learn to love and fear God, devote your ſelves to him, beſtow your Hearts upon him, imploy your time and ſtrength to pleaſe and honour him: abide not in a State of *ungodlineſs*, reſt not with a *form of Godlineſs*; but reſolve upon that *Real Holineſs*, which will produce a long and happy life in this World, and a longer and happier life in a better.

2. The *Second Preſervative* againſt *Old-age*, which indeed is contained in the *former*, is *Temperance* and *Sobriety* g. I mean that *gracious Vertue, which retains the Senſitive Appetite within the bounds of Reaſon and Religion*, whereby we keep a *Mediocrity* in the uſe of *Meats*, both in reſpect to their *Quantity*, neither loading nor pining the Stomack; and in reſpect of their *Quality*, neither debauching it by too much Variety, nor injuring it by things noxious. The ſame care in *Drinks*, leſt the *Quality* of them be pernicious, or the *Quantity* of them prejudicial. That the *Marriage-bed* be moderately uſed, ſo that the vital Spirits be not exhauſted. Now *mans* ſinful Nature above all other Creature;

g *Pugnandum tanquam contra morbum eſt, ſic contra ſenectutem. Habenda ratio valetudinis: utendum exercitationibus modicis. Tantum cibi & potionis adhibendum, ut reficiantur vires, non opprimantur.* Cic. *de ſenect.*

tures inclines to *exceſs* in all theſe: and it is pleaſant to the Fleſh; but it is the pleaſure of poyſon: At laſt they *bite like a Serpent, and ſting like an Adder*, Prov. 23. 32. not the Soul only, but the Body. They do inſenſibly, but infallibly weaken nature, diſorder the Harmony of the parts, breed the moſt fatal diſtempers, and render him, as we may daily obſerve, *old* in *infirmities*, that is but *young* in *years*. So that if they who give themſelves up to *Gluttony*, *Drunkenneſs* or *Laſciviouſneſs*, did truly love their own Souls, or yet their own Bodies, they would bridle their unruly Appetites for their own ſakes, and not pay ſo dear for that which muſt be repented of. And as a plain and even *way* is much more delectable, than always to be going up Hill and down; ſo certainly there is a thouſand times more eaſe and ſweetneſs in an even and *temperate courſe*, than in the perpetual unevenneſs of intemperance. How ſhould that body hold out, that is daily clogg'd and inflam'd with preternatural exceſſes? The intemperate man is conſtantly feeding an *Enemy*, whom it is charity to ſtarve; and deals with his Body as the *Ape*, who is ſaid to hugg her *young* to death. Whereas a wiſe *Sobriety* is *health to the Navel*,

and *marrow to the Bones*; by it the Humours, the Blood, the Spirits are all maintain'd in order and in vigour. His meals are pleaſant, and his ſleep is ſweet, and he is a Stranger to thoſe crudities, and conſequent diſtempers which peſter others. Thus *Plato* by his careful temperance ſpun out his life, tho a *great Student*, till he attain'd above *fourſcore*; and *Galen* to above *ſevenſcore years*; and *Seneca* [h] concludes, that there is no way to retard Old-age like a frugal Sobriety.

h *Sen.* Ep. 58.

Let me then perſuade all ſuch, as are *lovers of pleaſures*, more than lovers of God or of their own Souls, to have ſome pity on their poor *Bodies*. O break off your deſtructive Courſe, ſow not the Seeds of conſuming Maladies in your own Fleſh. *Be not among Wine-bibbers, amongſt riotous eaters of Fleſh. Put a Knife to thy Throat, if thou be a man given to Appetite*, Prov. 23. 1. 20. *Give not your Strength unto Women, nor your ways to that which deſtroyeth Kings*, Prov. 31. 3. Let not the *Beaſt* captivate the *Man*, nor your *Reaſon* be enſlav'd by *Senſe*; but recover a juſt dominion over your blind and brutiſh affections, that your days may be *long and lively* in the Land which the Lord giveth you.

If

If it be here *Objected*, that the moſt Religious and temperate perſons grow old as ſoon as others. It is *Anſwered*, that tho in theſe *external* things, *all things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked*; yet every wiſe man will take the likelieſt courſe for the bleſſing he deſires. Tho ſome Children that have had no good *Education*, nor good *Example*, have afterward proved eminent men; yet who but a deſperate man will hereupon reſolve, I will take no care about the *inſtruction* of my Children? but the prudent Parent will conclude, tho ſome of the beſt Education do miſcarry, and ſome with the worſt do flouriſh, yet I ought and will take the *likelieſt* courſe to bring up my Children in the fear of *God*: Even ſo in this caſe, tho *Old-age* and Death do ſeize upon divers pious and circumſpect perſons, as ſoon or before they come upon others, yet is it the *Intereſt* and *Duty* of all ſuch as regard God, or wiſh well to themſelves, to uſe the *fitteſt means* to preſerve their ſtrength and vigour, until their time and work be done.

For it is certain, that when the ſucceſs anſwers not the means, and that Diſtempers, notwithſtanding our Piety

and Sobriety, do overtake us; then it is permitted and ordained by the Wiſdom of *God* for the ſetting forth ſome way of His *Glory*, and for the *real Good* of the party affected. For an Holy and Good *God* never makes *Exceptions* to his *General Rules*, but in *Caſes reſerved* for his greater honour, and his Servants greater good. For *all the paths of the Lord*, tho never ſo croſs and crooked, are *Mercy*, I ſay, *Mercy and Truth to thoſe that keep his Covenant, and his Teſtimonies.* Pſal. 25. 10. And thus you have had ſome Account of the true *Cauſes*, and the beſt *Antidotes* againſt *Old-age*, which is the *ſecond Point* to be handled.

## CHAP. III.

### *The Sins of Old-age.*

### SECT. I.

*Cap.* 3. The Sins of Old-age.

I Come in the *Third* place to treat of the *Vices* and *Sins*, which are moſt incident to Old-age: for the beſt *Wine* that is, hath ſome *Dregs*. And tho there be none of *Old-folks Sins*, but they are found

found in ſome *Young-folks breaſts*; yet there are ſome particular *vices*, which are more *proper*, becauſe more *common* to *Aged* perſons, than to others. Nevertheleſs as the work of *Sanctification* hath been deeper, and the care in *Education* greater, ſo far the leſs lyable ſhall the Aged perſons be, unto theſe Corruptions [i]. He that *bears the Yoke in his youth*, will be happily fortified againſt them in his age. I do not therefore charge *every* Old man or woman with the following *Faults*; for many have better *learned Chriſt*, and are as free from them as any other: but for the moſt part *Old* people are propenſe to theſe *Vices*.

[i] *Hæc morum vitia ſunt, non ſenectutis.* Cicer. *de Senect.*

§ 1. Peeviſhneſs.

Firſt, *Frowardneſs* or *peeviſhneſs*, whereby they are prone to be moroſe, wayward and hard to be pleaſed; eaſily angry, often angry, and ſometimes angry without a cauſe. Seldom are they pleaſed with others, ſcarce with themſelves, no not with *God* himſelf: yea, they think, as poor *Jonah* did, that they *do well to be angry*. Too apt they are to aggravate every fault to its utmoſt dimenſions, and ſo never want matter for unquietneſs.

Now this is both a *Sinful* and *Miſerable* diſtemper. It is diſpleaſing to God, and it is very uncomfortable both to themſelves, and to others. Its true, that *Anger*

ger in it ſelf is not evil: our *Bleſſed Saviour* was *once* angry, but it was at Sin, and it was accompanied with Grief for the hardneſs of their Hearts. *Mark* 3. 5. When we are angry *at Sin*, we are angry *without Sin*. And it is alſo true, that *Old* people by reaſon of their *knowledge* in matters, do ſee more things amiſs and blame-worthy, more Sin, and more evil in Sin than others do; and having *liberty* by reaſon of their Age and Authority to ſpeak their minds, they are too prone to expreſs, that which others muſt digeſt with ſilence; and withall their bodily *diſtempers* diſpoſe them to more teſtineſs than others, whoſe continual health and eaſe makes their Converſation more ſmooth and quiet; and laſtly, they diſcern themſelves in ſome danger of being deſpis'd, and therefore are tempted to preſerve their Authority by frequent and keen reproofs and reflexions, and ſo *iniquum petunt, ut juſtum ferant*, they require too much, leſt they ſhould receive too little.

k *In fragili corpore odioſa omnis offenſio eſt.* Cic. *de ſenect.*

l *Contemni ſe putant deſpici, illudi.* id. ibid.

But tho theſe things may *abate* the faultineſs of this Sin, yet they are far from being ſufficient to juſtifie the ſame. Say, that this froppiſhneſs is their *Diſeaſe* rather than their *Sin*; yet the Diſeaſe is the

m *Severitatem in ſenectute probo, ſed eam modicam; acerbitatem nullo modo.* Cic. *de ſenect.*

the *effect* of Sin, and the *cauſe* of Sin, and *Sin* it ſelf. The mind is diſtemper'd by it, both your own and others; the Body is diſordered; unjuſtifiable words are ſpoken; the Soul unfitted for any ſerious devotion; and the proper ends of reproof ſeldom attained; for as the *wrath of man never works the righteouſneſs of God*, ſo it rarely *cures the iniquities of men*. The plaiſter being too hot, burns more than it heals [n]; and the *frequency* of finding fault, tempts the faulty to heed it the *leſs*; yea, they are prone to *harden* themſelves in evil, by retorting your *unquietneſs* upon you, as a Sin you live in without reformation.

[n] *Si is qui corrigere nititur, irâ ſuperatur, opprimit antequam corrigat.* Greg. *Mor.*

Strive therefore againſt this infirmity: pray earneſtly unto God for a *meek and quiet Spirit*: connive at ſmaller ſlips; be not ſevere againſt *involuntary* faults: expect not the ſame Wiſdom or Circumſpection in young people, as you have in ſo long time attained: bridle the *firſt* emotions of anger; and weigh the *nature* and *quality* of a miſcarriage, before you let fly at it, and do not kill a *Flea* upon the Forehead of your Child or Servant with a *Beetle*. Learn of *Plato* an *Heathen*, who being incenſed at his Servant, deſir'd his Friend *Xenocrates*, who then

then came in, that he would correct him; *for now*, ſaith he, *my anger ſurmounts my reaſon.* Or rather go to School to your heavenly Maſter, *Chriſt Jeſus*, who was meek and lowly, who being *reviled, reviled not again*, and *when he ſuffer'd, threatned not.* Give place to any one rather than to the *Devil.* Reſolve if others croſs you, that yet you will not puniſh your ſelf; for frowardneſs hurts no body ſo much as ones ſelf. And mortifie *Pride*, from whence, for the moſt part, theſe paſſions ſpring; for we are apt to aſſume ſo much, and value our ſelves ſo highly, that we think every one ſhould humour us; and they that expect much, will meet with many diſappointments.

Say not, that the cure is *impoſſible*; for in all ages there have been *Inſtances* of victories in this caſe. There was *Patricius* the father of St. *Auguſtine*, and there was Mr. *Calvin*, both of them naturally of *hot* and *haſty ſpirits*; yet did ſo moderate their temper, that an unbeſeeming word was ſcarce ever heard to come from them: yea divers of the *Heathen* [o] were eminent herein; and

[o] *In moribus eſt culpa, non in ætate: moderati enim, & nec difficiles ſenes nec inhumani, tolerabilem agunt ſenectutem. Importunitas autem & inhumanitas omni ætati moleſta eſt.* Cic. *de ſenect.*

doubt-

doubtleſs the *Grace of God* will not be wanting to you, if you ſincerely ſeek it, which will of *lions* make you *lambs*.

## SECT. II.

§. 2. Talkativeneſs.

A *Second Folly* incident to *Old-age*, is *Loquacity* or *Talkativeneſs*; that is, an exceeding proneneſs to ſpeak much; ſo that it hath paſs'd into a Proverb, *Senex pſittacus*, an old perſon is a Parrot. Herein they are *twice children*, whoſe faculty you know lies this way.

Speech is a moſt wonderful and excellent *Faculty* conferr'd only on humane nature, and for their common good, and it is great pity that it ſhould be abuſed. As our *Reaſon* begins to work, ſo our *Speech* comes in; which ſhews that all our words ſhould be govern'd by Reaſon. And yet how unruly is this little member! inſomuch as the *Apoſtle James*, c. 3. 6. calls the Tongue, a *World of iniquity*; the *hand* is not call'd a *world of iniquity*, for that cannot reach very far; but with the *tongue* we can walk over the whole world, and by the venome of it hurt even all mankind.

kind. And *Old* people, whoſe eyes and ears, whoſe hands and feet are much decay'd and diſabled, are apt to make the greater uſe of their *tongues*.

And whereas the nobleſt and beſt *ſubject* of Diſcourſe is the ever bleſſed God, his Properties, Word and Works, too few of them deal in this argument; but the ordinary Theme of their ſpeech, is concerning *Other folks*, and concerning *Themſelves*: and here you may find in their tongues the *Perpetual Motion*. About *Others*, their tongue travelleth round about, and few of their neighbours eſcape the ſcourge of it. It is their delight to be judging, cenſuring, and condemning all mankind. How much good might the ſame breath produce, if it were imployed in good inſtruction, in faithful counſel or in wiſe reproof? But their talent lies not that way, but rather like *Zoilus* of old, who being asked, why he carped ſo much at others, anſwer'd, that *he ſpoke ill of them, becauſe he could do no other ill to them*; ſo the impotence of old people muſt be a plea for their ill language: but God will *reprove thee*, and *ſet this* and *all thine other* ſins before thee, becauſe *thou ſitteſt and ſpeakeſt againſt*

*againſt thy brother*, and *ſlandereſt thine own mothers ſon*, Pſal. 50. 20, 21.

But their moſt pleaſing Harangues are concerning *Themſelves*. What they have *bin*, what they have *done*, what they have *had*, what Strength, what Beauty, what Eſtates, what Affairs they have managed, what adventures they have made, what victories they have gotten; in ſumme, wherever the Story begins, it ſhall be ſure to end at their dear ſelves, the feats they have *done*, or the reſpect they have *receiv-ed*.

Now all this muſt be nauſeous to every ingenuous hearer, and is moſt loathſome in the ſight of *God*. For *He* and *his Glory* is the only center, towards which all our words and actions ſhould tend. All other diſcourſe is no other or better, than wherein *Turks* and *Pagans* may vye with you: and our *Bleſſed Book* aſſures us, *Mat.* 12. 36. That *every idle word that men ſhall ſpeak, they ſhall give account thereof in the day of judgement*. If all your extravagant words in one day ſhould be written down, and preſented at night to you, it would amaze you; how then will ye anſwer whole *volumes* of them at the day of Judgment? ſay not, that

*words*

*words are but wind*; ſince they are ſuch a wind as, if irregular, will blow the ſoul into Hell; for *by thy words thou ſhalt be juſtified*, and *by thy words thou ſhalt be condemned.*

Bridle therefore this unruly member. Nature hath placed two barrs unto it, the *teeth* and the *lips*; but except *watchfulneſs* and *prayer* be added to them, they'l be too weak. *If any man offend not in word, the ſame is a perfect man*, Jam. 3. 2. and you will confeſs, that every man ſhould labour to be perfect in his Profeſſion; eſpecially you that are *Old diſciples*, and ſhould exceed others in ſtrict *holineſs*, as much as you do in *years.*

Conſider, that he who often ſaid, *let him that hath ears to hear, hear*; ſaid not, let him that hath a *tongue* to ſpeak, be *ready to ſpeak.* No, he hath given to men *two ears*, and but *one tongue*; to ſhew that we ſhould be *ſwift to hear*, but *ſlow to ſpeak.* It is true, as *Elihu* grants, *Job* 32. 7. *Dayes ſhould ſpeak, and multitude of years ſhould teach wiſdom.* Their knowledge and experience qualifies them for it; and if young people would but ſee their own weakneſs, and were modeſt and humble,

ble, they might with much *eaſe* learn thoſe things of the Elder, which they have *dearly* bought. P So that the *Talkativeneſs*, which is culpable in *Old* perſons, is utterly intolerable in *Young* ones. But yet even by thoſe that are Old, both the *Matter* and the *Meaſure* of their talk is to be obſerved; and you ſhould conſider, What good ſhall I now procure by ſpeaking? Whither is my Tongue walking? What hurt by holding my peace? What words are theſe, that are burſting out? It is *Plutarchs* Counſel. And the ſame *Author* a Heathen reſolves, that we ſhould never ſpeak, but when it is ſome way neceſſary, or uſeful to our ſelves, or others. And that was a nipping anſwer, which *Zeno* the *Philoſopher* gave to ſome *Embaſſadors* that were come to *Athens*, and had feaſted ſome *Learned* men there, who had talked liberally to them: And *what*, ſaid they to him, *have you to tell us*? *Why*, ſaith he, *tell thoſe that ſent you, that you met with one Old man, who knew how to hold his peace.* And a *wiſe man* reſolves, that *he that hath knowledge*, who of all men may beſt ſpeak, *ſpareth his words*, Prov. 17. 27. And you whoſe humour prompts you to be ſparing, ſhould not be ſo prodigal herein. He was a *wiſe man*, that ſaid,

P *Difficilibus ac moroſis ſenibus aures libenter præbeto; qui proverbiorum ſententiis adoleſcentes ad recta ſtudia cohortantur.* Hieron. *Ep. ad Aug.*

Lib. *de garrul.*

*Simonides.*

ſaid, he had often *repented that he ſpake*, but never that *he held his peace*.

Let the *Glory* of *God*, and the *Profit* of the hearer be ſtill the meaſure of your talk. Hunt not after the applauſe of men, which is but empty Air; and remember, that you may never *juſtly commend* your ſelf, but when you are *unjuſtly accuſed* by another. And then conſider withal, that the more a Man ſpeaks, commonly the leſs he is heeded; and therefore if you would have people to mind what you ſay, check your loquacity q, and take notice how the *Wiſe* man placeth *Silence* before *Speech*, ſaying, *Eccleſ.* 3. 7. *A time to keep ſilence, and a time to ſpeak.*

q *Oportet ut ſenilis ſermo non ſolum ſit gravis, ſed etiam brevis.* Aug.

## SECT. III.

§ 3. Envy. THE *Third Sin* more peculiar to *Old-age*, is *Envy*, which is *an inward Grudging at thoſe who do in any thing excell us.* Now becauſe they which are *Old* do ſee many that ſurpaſs them in ſtrength, beauty, riches or eſteem, they are too apt to look at them with an envious Eye, and to grudge them thoſe bleſſings, which God hath vouchſafed them. Hence it

It is but too uſual with them, to leſſen their deſerts, to carp at their enjoyments, to abound in all ſuch reports and ſtories, as may degrade or blacken them; thinking by a great miſtake, that what is *detracted* from others, is *added* to themſelves. Thus when an Houſe is decaying, all the props men can get, they will buttreſs it up withall: but theſe are but rotten Pillars, and will but expoſe you to more contempt.

For this is an *odious ſin* in it ſelf: from hence proceeded the *Fall* of the *firſt Adam*, and the *Death of the Second*, for which miſchiefs we ſhould hate it the more. And indeed it is a very unreaſonable thing to envy thoſe mercies to others, whereof we have had our ſhare as well as they. Are they ſtrong, comely or reſpected? You have in your time partaken of them, and why ſhould you grudge at thoſe that do but come after you? It is like as if the *Southern Husbandman*, who hath inn'd his Harveſt in *July*, ſhould repine at them that live more *Northerly*, whoſe Harveſt is in *September*: why, the *former* had his Harveſt as well as the *Other*; and hath reaſon rather to be thankful to *God*, than to envy them that follow him. Beſides, would you have two Harveſts? What

anſwer can you give to our *Saviours* queſtions, *Matth.* 20. 15. *Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own? is thine eye evil, becauſe I am good?* He that grudges at Gods gifts, would make a miſerable diſtribution of them among men, if they were at his diſpoſal. No no, younger people have their proportion of comelineſs, ſtrength, eſtate, honour and parts, and you have yours; and they are diſtributed by a wiſe Hand, who is ever *righteous in all his wayes*, and *holy all in his works.*

And therefore labour with all your might to extinguiſh this *curſed flame.* Remember that *wrath killeth the fooliſh man*, and *that envy ſlayeth the ſilly one*, *Job* 5. 2. You envy *others*, but you hurt your *ſelves.* Few ſins have a more malignant influence upon *Mind* and *Body*, than this Sin of Envy. On the other ſide, if you bleſs the Lord for other mercies, you have the comfort of them[r]; if you repine at them, you loſe the comfort of your own. I know that *the ſpirit that dwelleth in us luſteth to envy*, Jam. 4. 5. but to them that ſeek it, *God giveth more grace.* Be contented with ſuch things *as ye have:* 'tis not ſaid, with ſuch things as 1. you *have had*,

r *Tolle invidiam & habes quod meum eſt.* Aug.

*had,* or ſuch things, as 2. *others* have, or ſuch things as 3. you *would* have, but with ſuch things as ye have, becauſe he hath ſaid, *I will never leave thee nor forſake thee.* If you have him, you have *enough*; if you have him not, you have *too much.*

Let him who is infinitely wiſe have liberty to diſpoſe his gifts as he pleaſeth: and inſtead of grudging at the excellencies of others, labour you for ſomething in your ſelves to ballance them. Your *Gravity* will be as valuable as their *Beauty*, your *Wiſdom* as their *Strength*, your *Grace* as their *Wealth.* They do but ſurpaſs you in things that will fade as yours have done, but you may excell them in things which are everlaſting.

Beſides, you ſhould conſider, that we are all *fellow-members* of the ſame body, and ſo we ſhould rejoyce in their welfare and in their comforts; that's the way to bring them to ſympathize with us in our defects; and they that pay reſpect to thoſe *above* them, ſhall moſt uſually receive it from them *below* them; whereas the *Envious* man takes pleaſure only in puniſhing of himſelf.

## SECT. IV.

§. 4. Arrogance.

THE *Fourth Vice* too common to *Old-age*, is *Arrogancy* and *Conceitedneſs*. An humour whereby they aſſume ſo much to themſelves, as if they had a *Monopoly of Wiſdom* to themſelves, and that their word muſt be a law in all caſes, ſo that they can endure no contradiction. It is likely enough that *Jobs friends* had a ſpice of this diſtemper: for they were *very aged*, *Job* 32. 6. and we find them very wiſe in their own conceit. And it is moſt true, as before, that *Dayes ſhould ſpeak*, and that they are moſt likely to be in the right. Happy had *Rehoboam* bin, if he had acquieſced in the counſel of the *Old men*: for which is abler to adviſe, they who are only helped by ſome natural parts, a working fancy and a fluent tongue, or they who have read many *men*, as well as many *books*, and have weighed *things* as well as *words*, and by experience are grown wiſe? Theſe perſons may certainly expect, that a great regard be given to their opinions. But yet as *Job*, c. 32. 9. *Great men*

*men are not alwayes wiſe, neither do the aged underſtand Judgment.* All aged people have not a Patent for *Infallibility*, nor any *at all times*. If old *Nicodemus* his notion of *Regeneration* muſt have paſs'd for Orthodox, what kind of Divinity ſhould we have had? he knew not what it was to be born again, though he were *a Teacher in Iſrael*; and I greatly fear he hath his fellows in all Ages and Places. Sometimes Old men *dream dreams*, and *young men ſee viſions*, as *Joel* 2. 28.

The Almighty will not confine his *Gifts*, no more than he doth his *Graces* to any order of men; and therefore *no man* ſhould *think of himſelf more highly than he ought to think*, but *to think ſoberly, as God hath dealt to every man*, *Rom.* 12. 3. And accordingly, the *Aged* are exhorted, *Tit.* 2. 2. in the firſt place to be *Sober*. It becomes no man to abound alwayes in his own ſence, or to dictate in every company; but rather according to that *Levites* method, *Judg.* 19. laſt. *Conſider the matter, take advice*, and then *ſpeak your minds*. The Spirit of God dwells not in a proud heart: *Pride*, and *arrogancy*, and *the evil way*, and *the froward mouth he hates*, *Prov.* 8. 13.

Check therefore and mortifie this ſinful Temper. Mind the *Apoſtles* counſel, *Rom.* 12. 16. *Be not wiſe in your own conceits.* Let not your Determinations *begg* reſpect by the number of your *years*, but *command* it by the weight of your *Reaſons*; ſo there will be more of God than of man in your Counſels. Believe it, neither great Age, nor great Honour, nor both together do infuſe wiſdom; for *Solomon* hath ſaid, *Better is a poor and a wiſe child, than an Old and fooliſh King, who will no more be admoniſhed*, *Eccl.* 4. 13. Why ſhould you therefore imagine, that Wiſdom muſt needs live and dye with you? that your words muſt be alwayes Oracles? O Labour for more Humility, and be content with your proper meaſure. Know for certain, that all conceitedneſs comes from *Pride*, which Sin cleaves to a man even to the grave. Conſider how the *Scripture* diſgraces this humour of yours, *Prov.* 26. 12. *Seeſt thou a man wiſe in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him.* Reflect ſometimes, how often you have bin miſtaken, even wherein you have been extreamly confident. He muſt be *omniſcient*, that is alwayes *infallible*. Let *God be true, but every*

*every man a lyar.* Young *Elihu*, may ſometimes out-ſtrip *Job* and his *three friends*, and no meer man is wiſe at all times.

## SECT. V.

THE *Fifth* and moſt Epidemick *Sin* of *Old-age*, is *Covetouſneſs* or *Worldly-mindedneſs*, that is, an *inordinate love of Riches*, which is ſhown in an inſatiable endeavour to *procure* them, and in an unreaſonable lothneſs to *part* with them. Though this *Vice* be frequently found in *young* people, as in that *young man*, Matth. 19. 22. who was free from other groſs Sins, but infected with this; yet it is a Diſeaſe more peculiar to *Old-age*. They feel the decayes of *Nature*, and think to ſupport themſelves by their *abundance*. They muſt have ſome *Recreation*, and are by reaſon of their Age incapable of other pleaſures, and ſo do place their delight in heaping up Riches, as *ſome* [f] of them have ingenuouſly acknowledged. They alſo know

§. 5. Covetouſneſs.

[f] Simonides *ob avaritiam culpatus reſpondit, ſe per ſenectutem reliquis ſpoliatum voluptatibus, unicâ lucrandi voluptate gravem recreare ætatem.* Plutarch.

that

that their weakneſs and infirmities do expoſe them to contempt, and therefore endeavour to obviate that by their Wealth, and ſo make themſelves conſiderable by their Eſtates. Theſe are the *Crutches*, which when weakneſs overtakes them, they lean upon and ſupport their fainting ſpirits withal.

And they want not variety of *Pretences* whereby to juſtifie their courſe: *as* that they are only providing for a rainy day, for troubles and *Caſualties* that may befall them; that they ought to lay up for their Children and Poſterity, or elſe they were worſe than *Infidels*; yea, that they are gathering only to beſtow it at their death on ſome *pious* or *charitable* uſe. And *Satan* is not wanting to nurſe this humour in them, by ſuggeſting to them expectations of a long life, a diſtruſt in the Providence of *God*, and continual fears of want: which is nurſed by the coldneſs of their temper, and by their conſciouſneſs of their inability to get much by their labour: And theſe meeting with that inveterate *Self-love*, which is inherent in them, and conſequently an uncharitable frame of mind towards others, hardens them in their tenacious temper;

temper; ſo that as they grow *weaker*, this luſt grows *ſtronger*[t]; until Divine grace doth open their eyes, or elſe the Earth at laſt ſtop their mouths.

[t] *Omnia in homine ſenſcunt vitia: ſola avaritia juveneſcit.* Aug. *Serm.* 48. *ad fratres in eremo.*

This bitter root ſpoils their *Devotions*, interrupts their prayers, renders the word of God taſtleſs, becramps them to all *God Works*; this diſturbs their *Reſt*, the thoughts and cares about theſe things do viſit them laſt at night, and meet them firſt in the morning, and diſquiet them the day throughout; for *where the treaſure* is, *there will the heart be alſo.* Oh the cares, the fears, the vexations that poſſeſs a covetous heart! but only that we can digeſt any thing that we *delight* in, though it be never ſo bitter, elſe no man could endure the life of a covetous miſer. But it is the *Old-mans* recreation; the beſt of his time and the ſtrength of his ſpirits are conſumed, either about the keeping of what he hath, or about getting more: for as he hath no *vent* for his abundance, ſo he obſerves no *limits* for his deſires. As the bladder, the more it is filled with wind, it ſtretches the more; ſo the more his riches increaſe, the more his heart is ſet upon them; ſo that he ſeeth more beauty in his *Money*, than in the *Sun* in the

the firmament [u]. No thoughts, no diſcourſe, no deſign pleaſeth them, except it end in *gain:* but when there is an opportunity of doing good, the *heart* is cold, and the *hand* is lame. Nay ſome of them will not afford conveniences, ſcarcely neceſſaries to their families or to themſelves, but run in debt to their own backs and bellies, to their children and ſervants, and fooliſhly chooſe to *live poor*, that they may *dy rich*.

[u] *Gratiùs aurum intuetur quam ſolem.* Ambroſ.

Now this Vice in it ſelf it is plain *Idolatry*, and the *root of all evil*, leading men into *temptation and a ſnare*, *into many fooliſh and hurtful luſts*, *which* at laſt *drown men in deſtruction and perdition*, 1 *Tim.* 6. 9, 10. For the worldly man gets and keeps his Eſtate with travel to his Body, vexation to his Spirit, ſcruple to his Conſcience, with danger to his Soul, with envy of his neighbours, with ſuits to his children, and with a curſe to his poſterity. Do but turn to *Job* 20. 15. and read that *chapter* out. But in no ſort of men is *Covetouſneſs* ſo unaccountable, ſo very fooliſh as in *Old* people. For what can be more abſurd (ſaid a *Heathen* [w]) than to be ſo much

[w] *Avaritia verò ſenilis quid ſibi velit non intelligo; poteſt enim quicquam eſſe abſurdius quam quo minus viæ reſtat, eo plus viatici quærere.* Cicer. *de ſen.*

much concern'd for *travelling Expences*, when we have ſo *ſmall* a part of *our way to travel*? Or as St. *Auguſtine* [x] expreſſeth it, to load our ſelves with the greateſt Burdens, when we are neareſt the end of our Journey? It is no doubt a plain infatuation, and an inſtance of the power of the *Prince of this World* on mens minds, and of the Corruption of our Nature to effect this; that thoſe who have ſeen the Vanity of all theſe things, the uncertainty, the unſatisfactorineſs, the vexatiouſneſs of them, ſhould ſo dote upon them: that they who not only know, but even feel in themſelves, that they *muſt ſhortly*, and *may ſuddenly* leave them all, and perhaps have no thanks at all from them that enjoy them; that yet theſe perſons, wiſe in other things, ſhould ſet their Hearts upon them, and hunt after a World that is flying from them. How much more comfortable were it, to do all the good they can? to feed the hungry, cloath the naked, to procure the Prayers of the diſtreſſed, while they have opportunity? to make Friends of the *Mammon of unrighteouſneſs*, to be eſteemed of men, to be loved and honoured of *God*! *A good man ſheweth fa-*

[x] *Gravioribus ſumptibus ſe onerare feſtinat, cùm jam pervenirit quo tendebat.* Aug. ſer. de temp. 247.

*Fugientem ſequimur mundum.*

*vour*

*vour and lendeth: he will guide his affairs with diſcretion. Surely he ſhall not be moved for ever, the righteous ſhall be in everlaſting remembrance*, Pſal. 112. 5, 6.

The *Pleas* which they produce for their Juſtification or Excuſe, are all inſufficient. Have you no other *Recreation*? Surely, there are more and better *Diverſions*, *Natural*, *Artificial*, and *Spiritual*, than heaping up riches. Inſtance but in the *laſt* of theſe, *Pſal.* 119. 14. 72. *I have rejoyced in the way of thy Teſtimonies, as much as in all Riches: yea, The Law of thy mouth is better unto me, than thouſands of Gold and Silver.* Again, Do you think that theſe will defend you from *Contempt*? True *Piety* and *Charity* is a far better way, *Pſal.* 112. 9. *He hath deſperſed, he hath given to the Poor; his righteouſneſs endureth for ever: his Horn ſhall be exalted with Honour.* Think you, that in your *decays of Nature*, there be no better *ſupports*, than your Riches? Yes, the favour of God, the love of Chriſt, the comforts of the Spirit, the feaſt of a good Conſcience, and the joyful hopes of eternal Happineſs, are as much beyond them, as the Sun is brighter than a Glow-worm. Will providing for *Contingencies* excuſe you? Alas,

Alas, your Riches will be no certain refuge for you, *Prov.* 18. 10, 11. *The Name of the Lord is a ſtrong Tower: the Righteous runneth into it and is ſafe. The Rich mans Wealth is his ſtrong City, and as an high wall* (but 'tis only) *in his own conceit.* That bond, *Heb.* 13. 5. ſealed to us, is worth all your Specialties, and all your Eſtates: He hath ſaid, *I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee.* Can you juſtifie your immoderate ſcraping by a juſt proviſion for *your Children* and Relations? No, no, That's but an excuſe; for they that have no Children, are as ſick of this Diſeaſe as others. But if you have Children, this courſe of yours is the way to undo them. A moderate care for Poſterity, is a Duty, wherein we may expect a Bleſſing: but the *Covetouſneſs* of the Parent, doth but provide for the *Luxury* of the Child, and ſo the Parents Soul is ruin'd in the *getting*, and the Childs in the *ſpending* of what is ſo gotten. If your poſterity fear God, they ſhall want no good thing, they ſhall have *enough*: but if they do not, they will have *too much*. God will be diſhonoured, and themſelves undone for ever.

Neither will religious *purpoſes* of doing

ing ſome *Good* with your Eſtates, excuſe your preſent penuriouſneſs: for that is to do evil that good may come of it. Hear what *God* himſelf ſaith to this, *Iſa.* 61. 8. For *I the Lord love judgment, I hate robbery for a burnt Offering.* They that will part with nothing while they *live*, nothing will be accepted from them when they *dye*. *Plead* not your unſpotted Juſtice, Honeſty and Equity, againſt this charge; as if a Man could not be *covetous*, that meddles only with *his own*. For tho fraud, injuſtice and oppreſſion be ſometimes the *Effects*, yet the *Nature* of covetouſneſs ſtands in *overloving the World*; and ſo you may be damnably guilty of this Sin, tho you keep you within the limits of your Eſtate. For as a man may be guilty of uncleanneſs with his *own* Wife, and be drunk with his *own* drink, ſo a man may be covetous with his *own* Riches. We do not find that the *rich Fool*, *Luk.* 12. nor that the *rich Glutton*, *Luk.* 16. did other folks wrong; nor thoſe on the left hand of *Chriſt*, *Mat.* 25. that they robb'd the poor or wrong'd the needy, but yet all guilty of this accurſed vice.

Strive therefore to break this ſnare; And to this end, 1. Conſider theſe few things,

things, namely, The abſolute *Vanity* of all theſe worldly things; that is, they are not able to ſatisfie the Mind, or to cure the Body, or to imbeliſh your Name, or to lengthen the Life, or to ſave the Soul: and all this hath been prov'd, and concluded by *Solomon* a King of vaſt *knowledge* and *experience*. And their Vanity is yet further ſeen in their *uncertainty*, there being an hundred ways to rend them from you, and as many ways to rend you away from them. And are they not vain then? And why *wilt thou ſet thine Eyes upon that which is not? For riches certainly make themſelves Wings, they fly away as an Eagle towards Heaven*, Prov. 23. 5. Conſider again the *End* for which theſe things are beſtowed upon you, which is, that you ſhould imploy them, and uſe them for him. God doth hereby try you, whether you will deny your ſelf, whether you will glorify him, whether you will lay out your Talent, or lay it up. He makes ſome perſons *poor*, that he may exerciſe their patience and humility; and others *Rich*, to exerciſe their bounty and their charity. In ſhort, Riches were never given to any man to ſpend upon his Luſts, or to hoard them up without juſt cauſe; but to *do*

*good withal*, firſt to your ſelves, then to your Families and Relations, and then to others: when they are not thus imploy'd, you utterly pervert the End for which you are intruſted with them. Conſider alſo, that you are but *Stewards* in your Eſtates, and you muſt give a juſt account of them to him. All that you poſſeſs is *His Stock* only in your Hands, it is not your own. *The Earth is the Lords, and the fulneſs of it.* If you really believed this, you would never pinch or grudge to your ſelf or others, that which is convenient. For what is it to a Steward, when his Lord and Maſter ſhall order him to abate ſo much to his Tenant, or pay ſo much to another poor man? He ſticks not at it, he knows it will paſs in his account, and there's an end. And why cannot you, who are only Stewards to the God of Heaven and Earth, of that Eſtate which is in your hand, when you can diſcern that he requires it; I ſay, why cannot you give, forgive, lend, lay out freely, for none of it is your own? and whether will it paſs better in your accounts; ſo much left in Bags or Bonds, or to a prodigal Heir; or ſo much of it ſpent in hoſpitality, ſo much in well-plac'd bounty,

and

and ſo much in prudent charity? And laſtly, conſider the plain *Command* and bleſſed *Promiſe* of *God* in that foreſaid, *Heb.* 13. 5. *Let your Converſation be without Covetouſneſs——For he hath ſaid, I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee.* q. d. Thou ſhalt have *that* which is *ſufficient*, or, thou ſhalt have *him* that is *All-ſufficient.*

2. *Pray earneſtly againſt this Sin.* Let your Eyes be ever towards the Lord, to pluck your Feet out of this Net. Without his divine Grace, this ſnare will be too ſtrong for you. There are *Medicines* to purge choler, and ſuch Humours which feed our Corruptions, but none to purge Covetouſneſs: No, this Luſt is rooted only in the Soul, the bodily Complexion is very little concern'd: and therefore you have the more need to cry earneſtly to God with *David*, Pſal. 119. 36. *Incline my Heart unto thy Teſtimonies, and not to Covetouſneſs.*

3. *Labour for Faith.* To believe what *God* hath revealed, and to rely upon what he hath promiſed. I have read of a *certain Perſon*, that in a change of times, after ſome debate about what was then impos'd, ſwore *by his Faith*, he muſt live;

but *another* of the ſame Cloth anſwered, that he would learn to *live by his Faith*: ſo when you plead for your ſelfiſh penurious courſe, that you *muſt live*, I counſel you to learn the *life of Faith*: for if you did believe the *Revelation* which *God* hath made of his *Nature* and *Covenant*, if you did believe the *Judgment* to come, and the everlaſting World after it, if you did believe the *Promiſes* or the *Threatnings*, which referr to this affair, you would readily deſpiſe all the things of this World, and ſet your affections on things above; you would, as you ought, be rich in good works, *ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate, laying up in ſtore for your ſelves a good foundation againſt the time to come*, that ſith this life is ſlipping from under your feet, you may *lay hold on eternal Life*, 1 Tim. 6. 18, 19.

## SECT. VI.

§ 6. Other Vices of Old-age.

AND theſe are the moſt *proper Sins* of *Old-age*: ſome *other* there are, which becauſe they are neither ſo *common* to all ancient people, nor yet *peculiar*

*liar* to them, and yet are more often found in them than in others, I ſhall not wholly conceal them, but rather more briefly handle them. Which are,

1. *Craftineſs*, which is *Prudence degenerate.* Old people have had much dealing in the World, and have ſeen, yea, perhaps felt the effects of other mens ſiniſter Carriage; and being too much devoted to a ſelfiſh intereſt, do thereupon too often ſtrain a point of equity and integrity, to compaſs their own ends. If this ſubtilty were only imployed for their own *ſecurity*, it were leſs culpable; but when it is an *Engine* to *inſnare*, or to *over-reach* their Brother, it is inexcuſable. When a Crafty old Miſer, hath a young Prodigal in his Tallons, what work doth he make with him? What cunning arts, what tricks and ſtratagems hath he to diſtill his Eſtate into his own Coffers? But this is a baſeneſs unbecoming a *Moral Heathen*, who would put himſelf into anothers caſe, and deal with him as he would be uſed by him: how enormous then is it for a Chriſtian, that ought by no means to live to himſelf, that ſhould remember he is but a Stranger in this Earth, and is ſeeking a better Country, that is a profeſſour of ſelf-denial and ſincerity!

Beware therefore of this unworthy Trade: believe, that what you ſave or gain by indirect ways, brings to you a *Curſe* along with it; reſolve, that if you cannot ſtand by *plain dealing*, to fall with it, your fall will be glorious. *Eſau* was a *cunning* Fellow, but *Jacob* was a *plain man*, and ſo ſhould all his Off-ſpring be. But if you will needs be exerciſing your Talent, imploy it in a wiſe contriving, which way to do good to your Neighbour. So did St. *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* 12. 16. *Being crafty, I caught you by Guile*, but he ſought not *theirs*, but *them*. You may alſo exerciſe your utmoſt prudence, in the *preſerving* your outward Eſtate and Credit; provided always, you do it not out of an inordinate affection to theſe things, nor to the *injury* or *prejudice* of any other: for that which doth *harm* to your Neighbour, will never do *good* to you, there being a juſt *God* that, *Job* 5. 13. *taketh the wiſe in their own Craftineſs, and the counſel of the froward is carried headlong*.

2. *Unteachableneſs*. When the fault is only in the *underſtanding* or *memory*, it is rather matter of pity, but when it is in the *will*, it is highly criminal. Now this is a fault very incident to *Old-age*, yea, the

the more ignorant, the more obstinate [y]. Hence we read, *Eccl.* 4. 13. of *an old and foolish King*, who *will no more be admonished.* They think it a disgrace to learn; they are more ready to *teach*, than to *learn.* It's grown proverbial, *They are too old to learn.* Indeed if the things propounded be unnecessary and useless, you may safely remain in your ignorance; but if they be proper either to your civil or spiritual Calling, it is a greater shame to be ignorant of them, than to learn them: especially in the great Points that are *necessary to Salvation.* How many instructive Discourses have you heard about these things, and how little have you learn'd? You have your Lesson to get, and your Master is just coming.

y Νεκρὸν ἰατρεύειν καὶ γέροντα νουθετεῖν, ταυτόν ἐστι.

O therefore *begg of God* and *Man* to teach you, and do not grudge to take somewhat the more pains to redeem your former negligence. *Cato* learn'd the *Greek Tongue*, when he was an *Old man*: and *Solon* [z] glories in this, that he was *still learning something in his Old-age.* How many famous *Divines* have learn'd the *Greek* and *Hebrew* in their *Old-age*? Why should you think your selves too wise or too good or too old to learn whatsoever

z Γυράσκω δ' ἀεὶ πολλὰ διδασκόμενος.

ſoever may make you more uſeful here, or more happy hereafter? It will be ſmall comfort for you to ſay, I *am rich*, and *have need of nothing*, when you ſhall be found at laſt, to be *poor*, *and blind*, *and naked*.

§ *Quid miſerius miſero non miſerantem ſeipſum?*

3. *Implacableneſs* is charg'd as a fault common with Old People. That is, ſuch a *deep reſentment* againſt ſuch as offend them, as is ſcarce aboliſhed. On the one hand, their *impotence* is ſuch, by reaſon of their Age, that they cannot eaſily revenge themſelves; and on the other, their thinking, Sedentary, and wakeful condition gives, them opportunity to rowl their diſguſts in their minds, till they are boil'd into a ſettled rancour. Thus they who in *malice* ſhould be *Children*, and in *underſtanding* ſhould be *Men*, are on the contrary *men in malice*, and *Children in underſtanding*: not apt to forgive, not eaſie to forget. What an implacable Spirit was in *Ariſtides* and *Themiſtocles* of old in *Athens*, until the wiſdom and integrity of the *former*, did ſomewhat aſſwage it for a time in the *latter*? The melancholly and ſtiffneſs of *Old-age*, will not ſuffer ſuch impreſſions to wear off, and their Humour diſpoſes them to aggravate things to the utmoſt. So

that

that the contentions of Old People, like thoſe among Brethren, are *like the Bars of a Caſtle.* They will owe a Man an ill-turn ſeven long years together, and then pay him at laſt.

But this is an inhumane, and ungodly temper. Would you have every one deal ſo by you? have you offended no body in all your courſe? What *Brute* is it, that continueth an everlaſting Rage? Would you be ſo treated by the great *God*, when you have offended him? How can you pray in this condition without *Curſing* your ſelves? If you do not forgive, you cannot be forgiven. I am ſure the affronts and injuries which you have received *from men*, are not to be compared to thoſe which you have offered *to God.* Away then with this deviliſh Diſtemper; make your Neighbour ſenſible of his offence, by a *cool repreſentation* of it to him, by your ſelf if poſſible, or elſe by ſome fit Friend, perhaps you may gain him. By *revenge* you can be but *even* with him, but hereby you'l get *above* him, and *conquer* him. However do not you puniſh your ſelf for his averſion, by ſuffering a Fire in your Boſom, which will hurt your own Soul, more than it doth your Neighbour.

bour. And do not nullifie all the good that is in him, nor all the kindneſs that you have received from him, but muſter up all his worthy qualities, and all the former reſpects and benefits that you have received from him, and this will melt you into a better temper. And eſpecially make it your earneſt *requeſt* unto *God*, to root up this Gall and Wormwood out of your Heart, and that he would make you *tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Chriſts ſake hath forgiven you.*

4. *Speculative wickedneſs* is another Sin too incident to *Old-age*. That is, either *Reflecting* upon *former* Sins, or *Fancying others* with delight. There is a *Threefold* complacence in ſin; *before* its commiſſion, by *contrivance*; *in* the Commiſſion by preſent *ſatisfaction*, and *after* the Commiſſion *by remembrance*: and as the ſet purpoſe before, ſo the delightful *reflexion* afterwards, is a Sin before God. Now weakneſs of Body, poverty in Eſtate, or other impediments may hinder *Old people* from thoſe Exorbitances, which they inwardly love, or in which they have heretofore actually lived: but yet they *ruminate* on them with pleaſure, and *Re-act* them in their fancy.

fancy. They do not, and perhaps they cannot now profane the *Lords day* as they have done, fight and quarrel as they have done, nor commit uncleanneſs as they have done, nor drink and debauch themſelves as they have done: but they can reflect upon theſe things with *content*; ſtrength and opportunity is wanting, but their Hearts are as wicked as ever. Hence it is, that you ſhall hear divers *Old* people rehearſing their former diſobedience to Parents, their refractorineſs to their Maſters, their petty purloynings, and other extravagances, with as freſh delight as they were at firſt committed.

Now this is in effect to act over thoſe Sins again: *Ezek.* 23. 19. *She multiplied her Whoredoms in calling to remembrance the days of her Youth, wherein ſhe had plaid the Harlot in the Land of Egypt.* Yea, perhaps this guilt will be found in ſome reſpects *greater* than the *firſt*: becauſe it's likely that *then* there was *leſs knowledge*, and *more temptation*, than *now* there is. This contemplative wickedneſs nails on the former guilt, and contracts more: this demonſtrates, that the man would be always ſinning, if he could; and that he is a meer ſtranger to true Repentance. I deny not, but that the firſt

firſt ſudden glance of the memory upon former Vanities may be pleaſed, but 'tis only a ſurprize; every pious Soul hath them ſtill in *remembrance*, and is *humbled in it*. Thus *Holy Auguſtine* in his *Confeſſions* reflects upon his *Robbing* an *Orchard* in his younger days, with all the heart-breaking Aggravations imaginable. Thus *Holy David* cryes out, *Pſal.* 25. 7. *Remember not the Sins of my Youth*, nor *my Tranſgreſſions*. Labour you to write after their Copies; let the remembrance of your former follies be always *bitter*: never dwell upon the thoughts of them, but with a Sigh. O what a Fool, what a Beaſt have I been! O what have I done! I am *aſham'd*, yea, *even confounded, becauſe I bear the reproach of my Youth*, Jerem. 31. 19. Make not the Wound to bleed again by rubbing it afreſh, leſt it feſter and grow incurable at length. Let it appear ſome way, that it is not want of *power*, but want of *will* that makes you Sober. A diligent care to avoid the Sins of your *preſent Age* and *State*, will be a good proof, that you would not commit the faults that are paſt, if you were to live over your life again. *A better Life is the beſt Repentance* [a].

[a] *Optima pœnitentia, nova vita.* Luther.

And ſo much ſhall ſuffice upon this unpleaſant

unpleaſant but neceſſary *Subject*, concerning, the *Sins* of *Old-age*: which as they ſhould be matter of our hearty *Grief*, ſo they ſhould be the ſubject of our holy *Jealouſy* and continual *Caution*. For tho perhaps we may not be *guilty* in them all, yet it is as unlikely that we are *clear* in *all*. So that whereinſoever the *Spirit of God* hath in theſe Papers or otherwiſe found us out, it is our indiſpenſable duty to watch and pray with all ſeriouſneſs and conſtancy againſt the ſame; and tho they be rooted never ſo deep, we muſt mortify and pluck them up, tho we ſhould (they are grave *Seneca*'s words) *pluck our very Hearts up with them* [b]. For as one Diſeaſe is ſufficient to kill the *Body*; ſo any one Sin unmortified, is able to ſend *Body* and *Soul* into Hell. On the other hand, it will be one ſpecial token, that we are upright before God, when we keep *our ſelves from our own Iniquity*, Pſal. 18. 23.

And yet this is but the one *half* of our bounden *Duty*. For if you pluck up all the *Weeds* out of your Garden, it will be but a deſart place, unleſs you procure ſome *Herbs* and *Flowers* therein: ſo tho we ſhould clear our Hearts of theſe *Vices*, we ſhall have but naked and empty

[b] *Projice quæcunq; cor tuum lamiant, quæ ſi aliter extrahi nequirent cor ipſum cum illis revellendum erat.* Sen. *Ep.* 51.

ty Souls, unleſs we be furniſhed with ſuch *Graces* as are proper for us: which is the *next point* now to be treated of.

## CHAP. IV.

### *The Graces of Old-age.*

### SECT. I.

*Cap.* 4. The Graces of Old-age.

FOraſmuch as Old-age is liable to ſo many vicious *Habits*, it greatly concerns all that are in *Years*, to excell in ſome eminent *Qualifications*, which may præponderate the other; or elſe *Old-age* would be a *Miſerable Age* indeed. Now tho we may well hope, that they having been ſo long in *Chriſts School*, have throughly *learned Chriſt*, that they are indued with *every Grace*, and inſtructed to *every good work*; yet there be ſome *Peculiar Graces*, wherein the *Aged* do or ſhould excell. Not that any of them is *confined* to Gray Hairs alone: for as all the *Sins* above-mentioned may be found in thoſe that are young; ſo alſo the following *Graces* do apparently ſhine in many of them, whereby they promiſe a plentiful Harveſt in after-time, if they hold

hold on or mend [c]. For alas, to ſpeak the plain truth, too few poſſeſs them all, and too many are ſtrangers to them all. And therefore where I *deſcribe* them with the following *Excellencies*, underſtand it rather by way of *Inſtruction*, in what they *ſhould* be, than by way of *Aſſertion* of what they *are*, and you muſt remember alſo, that the *Denomination* is *à parte potiori*, the better ſort have them, and all ſhould endeavour after them: for ſince they are *actually poſſeſſed* by ſome, they may be *certainly obtained* by all.

[c] *Sunt quidem in juventute ſenes, & alii juvenes in ſenectute.* Ambroſ.

§. 1. Knowledge.

The *Firſt Grace* moſt proper for *Old-age* is *Knowledge*. They have or might have a great meaſure of all kind of Knowledge, having read ſo much in the Book of *Nature*, and in the Book of *Providence*. But there is a nobler *Object* of their *Knowledge*, which is *God* himſelf, his *Word* and his *Ways*: Herein the Aged perſon hath been verſed for a long time, 1 *Joh.* 2. 13. *I write unto you, Fathers, becauſe you have known him that is from the beginning*. There is no *Truth*, *Duty*, *Caſe*, *Sin*, or *Temptation*, but they have either heard, or read ſomething concerning it, and that often; and therefore muſt be ſuppoſed to have a more clear and diſtinct knowledge in all theſe things, than

than younger people [d]. Young people *think* that they know much, but *Old* people cannot chuſe but ſigh and ſmile at their ignorance. They find that the more *Knowledge* they have, the more *Ignorance* they diſcover in themſelves; and wherein they have been confident in their younger years, they ſee cauſe to alter their ſentiments afterwards.

[d] A Temple was once dedicated in *Spain* to *Old-age*, as to the miſtreſs of Knowledge. Dr. *Sheafe* of Old age.

For *Knowledge* is either *Infuſed*, or *Acquired* by Study, Reading and Converſe. In *theſe* the *Aged* muſt needs out-ſtrip the *Young*, as having been much longer converſant in the uſe of them: and for the *former*, the *Holy Ghoſt* doth commonly impart theſe *Habits* in the uſe of means; and ſo every way the *Old man* hath the advantage in this accompliſhment. Now *Knowledge* is that, wherein the *Image of God* partly conſiſts, it is the glory of *Angels*, and it is the honour of *Man*. Thoſe therefore were a ſtrange ſort of *Friars* in *Italy*, that *Luther* writes of, call'd *Fratres Ignorantiæ*, that took a ſolemn *Oath*, that they would know nothing at all, but anſwer to all queſtions with *Neſcio*: unleſs men were reſolved to renounce both *Divinity* and *Humanity* at once. No, doubtleſs, ſaving *Knowledge* is to the *Soul*, as the *Eye* to

to the *Body*, of great excellency and of great uſe. 'Tis this that Crowns the hoary head, and conveys Beauty unto wrinkles, *Prov.* 14. 18. *The prudent are crowned with knowledge.* Its true, many there are, who have taſted of the *Tree of Knowledge*, that have never taſted of the *Tree of Life*; and knowledge of it ſelf *puffeth* up, ſo that a man may have *all knowledge*, and yet no *Charity*, 1 *Cor.* 13. 2. Yet as it is true, there may be much knowledge *without* a grain of *Grace*; ſo it is certain, there cannot be one ſpark of Grace without *Knowledge*[e]. For how ſhall a Man know Sin, unleſs he underſtand the *Law of God*: how can he imbrace *Jeſus Chriſt* aright, except he know him? or build for Heaven without a *Foundation*?

[e] As *Lumen* is the *Vehicle* of influence, ſo the foundation of Regeneration is Illumination.

Now the *Aged* perſon hath lived long, hath converſed both with *Men* and *Books*, hath the Ruſt of natural Ignorance well ſcour'd off[f]; and if he have not more *Riches* than others, yet ſurely he hath more *Knowledge*, eſpecially if he hath *put on the New Man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the Image of him that created him*, Coloſ. 3. 10. And therefore tho it be a Brutiſh thing in any body, to be ignorant in thoſe things that concern their *Happineſs*, yet it is intolerably abſurd

[f] *Tum maximè mentis oculus acutè cernere incipit, cum primum defloreſcit corporis oculus.* Plato *in conviv.*

ſurd for one that is *Old in Years*, to be a *Child in underſtanding*: to be like the *Old man*, which Mr. *Pemble* tells of, who, tho by a probable computation, he had heard *two or three thouſand Sermons*, being above *ſixty* years old, yet being examined by a *Miniſter* on his Death-bed concerning his Knowledge of God, he thought he was *a good Old man*; concerning Chriſt, that he was *a towardly young Youth*; concerning his Soul, that it was *a great Bone in his Body*; and concerning his future Eſtate, he ſaid, if he had done well, he ſhould be put into a pleaſant green *Meadow*: what a woful thing is this, that a conſtant *Hearer*, and ſeeming *Lover* of the Word of God, as this man was, ſhould live and dye in ſuch groſs *Ignorance*? No *Trade* how difficult ſoever, but *ſeven* or *eight* years will teach it; what a ſhameful thing then is it to be ſent into the world, purpoſely to learn to be a *true Chriſtian*, and after *fifty* or *ſixty* years to remain ignorant in the myſteries of it? To *be ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the Truth*, 2 Tim. 3. 7. On the other ſide, *Joſephus* tells us, ſpeaking of the *Jews*, Every one of our Nation being demanded of *our Laws*, can anſwer as readily, as *tell his own Name*; learning it as

as ſoon as we come to the uſe of Reaſon, it is imprinted in our minds. Certainly an ignorant Old perſon is the ſhame of *Chriſtianity*, yea, of *Humanity* it ſelf.

Let it therefore be your Study that are ripe in *years*, to be ripe in *Judgment*, to be well-grounded in the Knowledge of *God* and *Godlineſs*: whileſt others are heaping up Riches, do you treaſure up Knowledge. The Knowledge of *Natural* things, as alſo of *Civil* affairs will adorn you; the leaſt dram of *this* is more excellent than many Talents of Gold; but the leaſt grain of *Spiritual* and divine Knowledge, is more valuable than all the *Natural* and *Civil* knowledge under Heaven. Hence it is reported of *Albertus Magnus*, that, before his Death, he prayed that he might obtain the oblivion of all former vain knowledge, which might hinder his happineſs in the knowledge of *Chriſt*. Hear alſo the *Apoſtle*, Yea, *doubtleſs, and I count all things but loſs for the excellency of the Knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord*, Philip. 3. 8.

Be not diſcouraged with the ſeeming *impoſſibility* of attaining a ſufficient meaſure hereof. He that taught *Old Nicodemus*, will teach you. *Induſtry* and *Reſolution* will facilitate your atchievement. You muſt be convinced, that *Ignorance*

will never excuſe thoſe that have the *means* of *Knowledge*; that tho God doth not require the *ſame degree* of knowledge from all *Chriſtians*, but doth allow for mens *Education*, *Parts* and *Imployments*; yet he doth indiſpenſably require, ſo much as is neceſſary to the forming of the new Creature, to the neceſſary *Doctrines* and *Duties* of Chriſtian Religion; that neither the ſpiritually dumb, nor the blind, can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. *Awake* therefore ye that ſleep, out of your ſtupid negligence, and *Chriſt will give you light*. Redeem ſome time daily for Reading, Meditation and Prayer. *If thou cryeſt after Knowledge, and lifteſt up thy Voice for underſtanding. If thou ſeekeſt her as Silver, and ſearcheſt for her as for hidden treaſure: Then thou ſhalt underſtand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God*, Prov. 2. 3, 4, 5. Eſpecially improve the *Lords-day* to this end. There are variety of *Books*, which handle the *Grounds of Religion*, ſome more briefly, ſome more largely. Take not upon truſt the Doctrines of your Salvation, but endeavour to be able to give a *reaſon of the hope* that is in you. You ſhould be able to inſtruct *others*; for ſhame be not you Children in Knowledge

ledge your *ſelves*. And ye that are competently knowing, ſhould thirſt for more, and *grow in Grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*, 2 Pet. 3. 18. This is the fitteſt *Covetouſneſs* for an *Old Man* or *Woman* [g]: this will make you like unto God, honoured of wiſe men, and uſeful to all men.

[g] *Diſcamus in terrâ ea quarum ſcientia nobis perſeveret in cœlo.* Parzi *ſcitum Script. in Auditorio ſuo Theologico.*

## SECT. II.

§ 2. Faith.

THE *Second Grace* proper for *Old-age*, is *Faith*, whereby the Soul *doth embrace* [h] *Jeſus Chriſt as Mediator*, and alſo *rely* upon the *Promiſes* [i] of God for all good things needful. Now altho this *Grace* be needful for every Chriſtian, inſomuch as he is ſaid *to live by Faith*, a life unknown to all unregenerate men; yet it is or ſhould be the particular Jewel of *Old-age*. For as *Gods Word* and *Ordinances* are the uſual means to work *Faith*, and herein young and old ſtand upon the ſame level, they have equal capacity for the attaining of it: ſo ſtill *further Grounds* and *longer experience*, are proper helps for the ſtrengthning and encreaſing thereof. So that

[h] *Fides eſt amplexus Chriſti.* Dr. Redman.

[i] *Circumſtentia fidei eſt Verbum Dei; centrum fidei eſt Verbum Deus.* Dr. Arrowſmith.

as *Reaſon* is much improved by *Learning*, ſo is *Faith* by *uſe* and *experience*, hereby *Recumbence* is advanced into *Plerophory*. Thus *Abraham* is repreſented, *Rom.* 4. 19, 20. *Not weak in Faith*, when he was an *hundred* years old, and ſo *ſtaggered not at the promiſe of God through unbelief.* Tho his years rendred the Promiſe very unlikely, yet thoſe years had taught him, that the performance would be certain, and ſo being *ſtrong in Faith, he gave Glory to God.* As *they have heard, ſo have they ſeen it in the City of God*, and what they have *often ſeen*, they may *well believe.*

They have ſeen *the wicked in great power, flouriſhing like a green Bay-tree, and yet ſuddenly they have paſſed away*; and therefore they are not ſo ſtartled at the *proſperity* of ungodly men, as younger people may be. They have alſo ſeen the *righteouſneſs of the upright brought forth as the light*; and ſo are hir'd to believe, that it ſhall be *well with the righteous*, and it ſhall go *ill with the wicked* at length. They themſelves have been in outward ſtraits and dangers, and then wonderfully preſerved and provided for, and doth not this ſtrengthen their Faith? And then in caſe of ſpiritual

tual wants and troubles, when their Spirit is overwhelmed, the *Old-man* can ſay with *Aſaph*, *Pſal.* 77. 5. *I have conſidered the days of old, the years of ancient times*, and ſo prop up their Spirits in their greateſt dejections. If you that are *Old* want *Faith*, it is an arrant ſhame for you. For you have been ſo often told and aſſured of the *Veracity*, the *Power*, and the *Goodneſs* of God; and then you have ſo often *ſeen* theſe *Properties* of his exemplified to others, and to your ſelves, ſo many wonders of *Providence* done in your remembrance, that ye your ſelves muſt be the greateſt *wonder*, in caſe you do not believe and truſt him. When your Soul is caſt down, *you* may do as *David* did, *remember* God *from the Land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the Hill Mizar*: that is, you may review the help and comfort which you have had in this and the other place of your Pilgrimage, and ſo *hope ſtill in God*, that *the Help of his Countenance will be the Health of yours*. Pſal. 42. 5, 6, 11.

Learn therefore this life of *Faith*; and endeavour as you grow *weaker* in *body* to grow *ſtronger* in *Faith*. 1. For *Tem-*

*poral mercies.* You may be tempted to fear want in your *Old-age:* here's now occaſion for Faith, whereby you are firmly to believe either that you ſhall want *nothing*, or elſe *no good thing*, Pſal. 34. 9, 10. That the Lord will either *ſupply* your wants, or *inrich* you by your wants. It was a memorable ſaying of an *Ancient pious Woman, I have made many a meal upon the Promiſes, when I have wanted bread.* And *Chriſt* hath ſaid it, that *Man lives not by bread only, but by every word that cometh out of the mouth of God*, Matth. 4. 4. So that a child of God ſhall never want a *livelihood*, ſo long as there is a *Promiſe* in the *Book of God.* But then he had need of *Faith*, and the ſtronger the faith, the chearfuller life he lives. For as by it he injoyes *God in all things* in caſe of *plenty*, ſo by it he injoyes *all things in God* in caſe of *want.* 2. For *Spiritual bleſſings* it concerns you to live by *Faith*[k], to wit, for *Pardon*, *Grace* and *Comfort.* You have bin long converſant with the *Promiſes* of *God* for theſe mercies, and have had often *Experiences* of the Grace and Mercy of God unto you; and ſo may conclude with the Pſalmiſt, *The Lord hath bin mindful of us, he will bleſs us,*

*. St. ardiner* the Bp. of *Wincheſter* could ſay, Though *Juſtification* by *Faith* were not a good *breakfaſt* for men in the heat of youth, yet it was a good *Supper* for *Old-age.*

*us*, Pſal. 115. 12. He that forgave you *ten thouſand* talents upon your *firſt* Repentance, will readily forgive an *hundred* pence upon your *ſecond*. And he that gave you *good Deſires*, when you were not worth a good thought, will ſurely give you your *Deſires* of more grace, when your hearts are now fully ſet upon it. And he that ſpoke *Peace* to your Conſciences, when you were younger; will reſtore unto you the joy of his Salvation, as ſoon and as far as is good for you, now you are older; though at preſent you *walk in darkneſs*, and *ſee no light*. For an old ſervant he never utterly caſts off.

*Caſt not you away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward*; the dimmer the eye of your *ſenſe* grows, the clearer let the eye of your *Faith* become; by which you may ſee, as *Moſes* did on mount *Piſgah*, into the promiſed Land, and may Comfort your hearts with the foretaſts of Glory. By this *Faith* it was, that *Iſaac* when he was blind through *Age*, bleſſed *Jacob* and *Eſau* concerning things to come. By this *Faith Jacob* when he was dying for *Age*, *bleſſed both the Sons of Joſeph*, and *worſhipped leaning upon the top of his Staff*,

*Staff*, *Heb.* 11. 20, 21. In ſhort, nothing is more needful for the Old perſon, whoſe limbs are weak, eye-ſight weak, memory, all weak, than a ſtrong and lively Faith.

And this you muſt labour for by earneſt and frequent *Prayer*; for *every one that asketh, receiveth*; and *he that ſeeketh, findeth*; Cry out therefore with the *Apoſtles*, Luk. 17. 5. *Lord increaſe our faith*; and when you find it *waver*, then cry again with the *man*, Mark 9. 24. *Lord, I believe, help mine unbelief.* Wee'l relieve a poor *Old man*, when we paſs by the younger; and he that hath planted that Compaſſion in us, hath much more in himſelf. And then *conſider* often of the *Truth* and *Faithfulneſs* of God, whoſe *Word* is as ſure as *Deed*. For all his promiſes are *Yea and Amen in Chriſt*. Which *Promiſes* you ought to ſtore up and ſtudy; inſtead of counting over your *Coyn* or ſurveying your *Bonds*, review the rich and precious *promiſes* of God, and clear your *Intereſt* in them; and they will beget new blood and ſpirits in your Souls, ſo that *your youth will be renewed as the Eagles*. And as long as ye are able, attend upon the *Preaching* of *Gods Word*; for

for as Faith *comes*, ſo it *comes on* by hearing. The ſame *Texts*, the ſame *Truths*, the ſame *Promiſes* which you have often read and heard, will ſtill afford new ſtrength to your Faith and Hope, as long as you live.

## SECT. III.

§. 3. Wiſdom.

THE *Third Grace* proper for *Old-age* is *Wiſdom:* which we take here in the *largeſt* and yet *trueſt ſence*, not once regarding that meer *worldly* wiſdom, which is not only *earthly and ſelfiſh*, but *wicked* and *deviliſh*; that is only skill'd in getting an Eſtate by hook or crook, and in keeping it without reſpect to God or our Neighbour. No, this cannot in any tolerable ſence be called *Wiſdom*. It's abſolute folly to loſe, yea to venture a Soul, for what may be utterly loſt to morrow. But I ſpeak here of true *Wiſdom* in its latitude, teaching men to live *ſafely* and *comfortably* here, and *happily* hereafter; as it fixes upon a right *End*, and chuſes and uſes the proper *Means* to attain it. This Grace directs a man to make choice of God for his Happineſs, and then

then diligently to apply himſelf to know, love, ſerve and enjoy him. This alſo guides him in all his imployments in this world, to attempt nothing but what is *poſſible*, *honeſt* and *uſeful*; to chuſe the fitteſt means for the attainment of his juſt ends; to place his *words* and *actions* in their proper circumſtances; not alwayes to take the *next*, but the *ſafeſt* way to his deſires; and in ſhort to *order his affairs with diſcretion*.

[1] *In ſenibus gravitas, in juvenibus alacritas, in adoleſcentibus verecundia.* Bern. *de ordin. vitæ.*

And this is the crown of *Old-age* [1]: Every Aged perſon is or ſhould be truely wiſe; *multitude of years ſhould teach wiſdom*, *Job* 32. 7. The crown of *youth* is their *ſtrength*, but the glory of *Old-age* is their *wiſdom*. And *wiſdom is better than ſtrength*, Eccl. 9. 16. *Wiſdom ſtrengtheneth the wiſe more than ten mighty men in a city*, Eccl. 7. 19. By this the *Aged* are better inabled to diſcharge their duties to Husbands, Wives, Children, Servants and Neighbours, than ordinarily younger people are; to diſpoſe *Spiritual* and *Secular* duties in their right places; to temper and guide that *zeal* and affection, which without it is fooliſh and dangerous. The Raſhneſs of young *Counſels* is evident in the caſe of *Rehoboam*, 1 King. 12. who following the

the heady and fierce advice of his Young *Courtiers*, loſt *ten Tribes* in one day, which the ſage Counſel of his *Old Counſellours* had certainly preſerved. And it is known, how often the *Commonwealths* of *Athens*, and *Rome* were indangered by the folly and raſhneſs of young heads, had they not bin ballaſted by the Sober and wary Interpoſition of graver perſons.

*Younger* people may excell in feats of *activity*, but the *Ancient* do exceed in the skill of *managery* [m]. And upon this account that famous *Fabius* was called *Maximus*, and was eſteemed more uſeful to his Countrey by being the *Buckler*, than *Marcellus* who was the *Sword* of the *Common-wealth*. Young people indeed may ſooner *apprehend* a buſineſs, and may more ſtrenuouſly *execute* it; but the *Old man* by comparing and weighing all circumſtances can make a better judgment of it, and ſo give better directions for the execution of it [n]. As it is ſaid of young *Muſicians*, that they may *Sing tunes* better, but the *Old Muſician* can *ſet leſſons* better. The Aged have not only *read* and *heard*, but alſo *ſeen* ſuch variety of Actions and Events, that

m *Temeritas eſt florentis ætatis, prudentia ſenectutis.* Cicer. *de ſenect.*

n *Senex plus proſpicit, melius conſulit, minus decipitur, certius judicat.* Palæol.

that it renders them much more circumſpect and wary in their courſes. This made that *Roman* ſoon anſwer the *Conſul* [o], that boaſted he had many *Arms* by him; *Tes*, ſaid he, *and I have many Tears*. And the *wiſeſt* of men concludes, *Eccl.* 9. 18. that *wiſdom is better than weapons of war*. And this is rarely found in *Novices*, they are too young to look *backward*, and too raſh to look *forward*. But the *Aged* perſon being taught by things paſt, hath a clearer ſight of things preſent, and conſequently doth more cautiouſly provide for things future. Words and Shews and Appearances do more eaſily deceive the Young; but the *Old* ſee through all ſuch varniſh, and penetrate into the inſide of men and things [p]: and ſo are ſtrangely ſtupid, if they be not much accompliſhed with this vertue. Miſerable is that *Old-age*, ſaith *Cicero* [q], that hath nothing grave beſides *gray hairs and wrinkles*. But any man that hath made but common *Obſervations* of what hath fallen out, with their *Cauſes* and *Effects*, during the ſpace of *forty* or *fifty* years, muſt needs underſtand better, *VVhat*, and *How*, and *VVhen* a thing is to be done,

o *M. Catſritius Placentinus Carboni conſuli.* Val: Max.

p *Difficile eſt verba dare ſeni.* Proverb.

q *Miſera quippe eſt ſenectus, quæ præter rugas & canos nil ſenile habet.* Cicero.

done, than thoſe that have neither read, ſeen, or obſerved half ſo much[r]. Hence that Expreſſion, *Pſal.* 119. 100. *I underſtand more than the ancients*; which implies, that the *Ancients* have ordinarily the greateſt ſtock of underſtanding. Hereupon *Themiſtocles* is ſaid to be *ſorry to dye, when he began to be wiſe*, being then an *hundred and ſeven* years of age: which is the common fate of mankind, to *dye* even juſt then when they begin to know how to *live*; and therefore no man ſhould deferr his careful endeavours to get wiſdom, ſince there is a *price* put into *our hands* for that end, if we have *but an heart to it*, Prov. 17. 16.

r *Senectus ætate ſit doctior, uſu tritior, proceſſu temporis ſapientior.* Hier. *ad Nepotia.*

*Ut æqualium uſus dulcior, ita ſenex tutior eſt.* Amb. *de offic.* c. 43.

Let it therefore be your ſtudy to *get* and *increaſe* in all wiſdom[ſ]: chiefly for the attaining everlaſting happineſs. For unto man *God* hath ſaid, *Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wiſdom, and to depart from evil, that is underſtanding*, Job 28. 28. For as it would be curious folly to contrive a neat Houſe, and then ſet it upon a quick-ſand; ſo doubtleſs all the policy of worldly men to get riches and a name, if they do not truly fear God, is but like an *houſe upon the ſand*, or a *ſpiders web* in the cieling, which will quickly vaniſh.

ſ *Senectus noſtra albeſcat canis ſapientiæ, non marceſcat carnis vetuſtate.* Aug. in Pſ. 112.

vaniſh. It's true *Wiſdom* for every man to chuſe the *Chiefeſt Good* for his ultimate *End*, and then to take *Gods Counſel how* to obtain it. *I have ſeen five Princes*, (ſaid Sir *Jo. Maſon*, on his death-bed,) and *bin Privy Counſellour to four*, *I have ſeen the moſt remarkable Obſervables in forreign parts*, *and bin preſent at moſt State-tranſactions* for *Thirty years together*, and *I have learned this*, *after ſo many years experience*, that *Serioufneſs is the greateſt VViſdom*, *Temperance the beſt Phyſick*, and *that a good Conſcience is the beſt Eſtate*: yea, *I would change the whole life I have lived in the Palace*, *for one hours enjoyment of God in the Chappel.* O that all young perſons would believe and conſider this ſage *Obſervation* of a dying man! For judge your own ſelves, Is it wiſdom to *do that* daily and wittingly, which muſt be *undone?* To pretend the *End*, *happineſs*; and neglect the *Means*, *holineſs?* To maintain ſtrong *hope*, and yet to have no *ground* for it? To chuſe the *worſt* of Evils, before the *chief* Good? To *live* in Sin, and yet expect to *dy* in *Chriſt?* To defer the *greateſt buſineſs*, till we have the *leaſt fit time*, and *ſtrength* to do it? and yet this is the wiſdom that paſſes currant in this world.

Endea-

Endeavour alſo to ſtore your minds with *Prudence* to order your affairs aright. There is no time, or place, or buſineſs, but there is uſe for this; not ſuch conſtant uſe for *Juſtice*, *Fortitude*, or many other vertues. This will render your gray hairs really comely. I had rather, ſaith *Nazianzen*, have one *drop* of Prudence, than a *Sea* of worldly riches. Integrity and Wiſdom are good Companions. A *Serpents Eye* is a ſingular ornament in a *doves head*. Hereby you will be uſeful to your ſelves, helpful to others, beneficial to all. Happy is that City, ſaid *Plutarch*, where the *counſels* of *Old* men, and the *arms* of *Young* men concurr for the Common good[t]. Your time will be rightly divided, your houſehold affairs calmly and conſtantly managed, and your mind freed from the hurry and perturbation, which fills the lives of other men. *Then I ſaw that wiſdom, excelleth folly; as far as light excelleth darkneſs*, Eccl. 2. 13. The *firſt* Direction which the *Apoſtle* gives to *Old* men, is, *Tit.* 2. 2. *That the aged men be ſober, grave* —— The *infirmity* of your *bodies* ſhould promote the *ſobriety* of your *minds*[u]: and folly is no where leſs excuſable than in an *aged* perſon.

[t] *Conſilia ſenum, haſtas juvenum eſſe.*

[u] *Infirmitas corporis eſt ſobrietas mentis.* Ambroſ. *Hex.* lib. 1. c. 8.

You ſhould therefore *pray* inceſſantly unto God for this *Bleſſing*. Jam. 1. 5. *If any of you lack wiſdom, let him ask of God,* and *it ſhall be given him.* And improve your *Thinking* time; for *meditation* inriches the mind, and helps us to draw ſuch *Inferences* from what we have read and heard and ſeen, which will ſerve for *Rules* of practice in every caſe. And eſpecially Converſe with the *Scripture,* which will make you *wiſe to Salvation.* Surely there is no book under heaven, which affords ſuch Rules of *true Prudence* for the conduct of our lives, as the *Book of Proverbs.* And ſtill remember this, that the more wiſdom, the liker you will be to God, and the more uſeful you will be to men. And certainly *Uſefulneſs* is next to the *fruition of God,* the greateſt happineſs of man upon earth.

## SECT. IV.

§. 4. Patience.

THE *Fourth Grace* that *Old-age* doth or ſhould excell in, is *Patience.* Which is a quiet and chearful undergoing whatever Difficulties, or Troubles, are

are incident to us in this world[w]. It extends indeed, in its largeſt ſence, to comprehend, both *Waiting Gods* time for the Bleſſings we *want*, and *Bearing* what croſſes he inflicts upon us, either by his *Own* hand or by *Others*. When we neither ſink by *Deſpondency*, nor rage by inordinate *Paſſion* either at the *ſtone*, or at the *hand* that throws it. And this not by vertue of a *Stoical inſenſibleneſs*, or of ſome *moral Arguments* which might quiet ſome of the *Philoſophers* under pain or loſſes, but could never do it under diſgrace. But that *Patience* which is directed by the *Example* of *Chriſt*, and ſtrengthened by the *Grace* and *Spirit* of *Chriſt*, keepeth the Soul from *ſecret* repining, or *open* murmuring at any event, ſaves from *diſtraction* at preſent and from *ruine* hereafter.

w *Patientia eſt honeſtatis & utilitatis cauſâ, verum arduarum ac difficilium voluntaria & diuturna perpeſſio.* Cicero.

And herein *Old-age* doth or ſhould excel[x]. They have met with many troubles in their pilgrimage; and the *Scripture* tells us, that *tribulation worketh patience*, Rom. 5. 3. conſequently, the *more troubles*, the *greater patience*. They have bin taught to wait for ſome *Mercies* which they have deſired, for many years; and ſo have bin taught *Patience*, which when they have well learned,

x *Patientia ſervum Domino, dominum Deo commendat: feminam exornat, virum approbat; amatur in patre, laudatur in juvene, ſuſpicitur in ſene.* Tert. *de pat.* c. 15.

then the *Mercy* hath been conferr'd. They have been tryed with many *Afflictions* from the hand of God, either upon their *Bodies*, as Sickneſs, Pain, *&c.* ſometimes by acute, ſometimes by chronical Diſtempers; and theſe have exerciſed and taught them Patience; or upon their *Souls*, as Deſertions, or other Impreſſions of divine Diſpleaſure, and thereby have learned quietly to *wait for the Salvation of God*; or by the *Death* of their dear Conſorts or Children; all which, by the bleſſing of God concurring therewith, have like continual burdens on the ſhoulder, inur'd and ſtrengthened them in this Excellent *Grace*. The *Aged* Perſon hath alſo had many provocations, loſſes, and injuries from *Men*, which have both tried and tamed his mettle. He hath been either uncomfortably *Match*'t, whereby his *Patience* hath been put to it every day; or croſs'd in his *Children*, or fix't near ſome unquiet *Neighbour*; or harraſs'd by a coſtly and tedious *ſuit of Law*; any of which have forced him to exerciſe this *Grace*: Or elſe he hath been ſmitten in his *Reputation*, or maim'd by ſome great loſs or diſappointment in his *Eſtate*, where he hath had no *Remedy but Patience*. I know theſe

theſe things do too often work the *wrong way*, that is, they produce fretfulneſs, rage, melancholy, and other diſmal effects; but in the upright man, they fortifie his Spirits, they break the pride, ſecurity and ſtubbornneſs of his Soul, and make him by *patient continuance in well-doing, ſeek for glory, honour and immortality*, and ſo fit him for *Eternal Life*.

And the *Aged* do or ſhould exceed thoſe that are *young* herein. For the tender ſhoulders of theſe cannot well bear theſe burdens: As *Ephraim* once, ſo they are like *bullocks unaccuſtomed to the yoke*, which fret and fume, and are gall'd under the aforeſaid tryals: Thô the *Holy Ghoſt* hath told us, that *it is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth*: But commonly it is ſome tract of time, before this yoke is quietly and evenly carried. *Old age* doth moſt perfectly teach this leſſon. He that in his youth would quickly have anſwered the *Lye* with his *Sword*, will then anſwer it with a *ſmile*. The tears which in our youth we ſpent upon any trivial occaſion, we then reſerve for better purpoſes; and we come to learn manners to wait Gods time for the mercies we

deſire. Time and trials have taught the *Old-man* to digeſt hard words, and hard things, rather than to fight it out. Good *David* could better bear *Shimei*'s Curſe when he was grown into *years*, than *Nabal*'s Uncharitableneſs, when he was *younger*: Now it was nothing but kill and ſlay, at leaſt every Male in *Nabal*'s houſe; but afterwards, ſo *let him Curſe, becauſe the Lord hath ſaid unto him, Curſe David: Who ſhall then ſay, Wherefore haſt thou done this?* 2 Sam. 16. 10. And thoſe *Diſciples* of our Saviour, who in their younger years would have had *Fire* ſent from *Heaven*, to revenge the incivility of the *Samaritans*, they in their riper years had learned, when *reviled to bleſs*, when *perſecuted to ſuffer it*; and to bear all indignities not only with much *patience*, 2 Cor. 6. 4. but *with all patience*, 2 Cor. 12. 12. Such is the effect of *years* and experience by the bleſſing of *God*.

And you that are in *years* muſt be inexcuſable, if you be defective in this *Grace*, becauſe you have been for a long time *Scholars* under a *Patient Maſter*, who *hath left us an Example, that we ſhould follow his ſteps; who when he was reviled, reviled not again, when he ſuffered,*

*he*

*he threatned not*, 1 Pet. 2. 21, 23. You have alſo read and heard many convincing *Diſcourſes* upon this *Subject*; you have ſeen the folly and madneſs of *Impatience*, and of *Revenge* in others; and you have had ſo many Croſſes of your own, that it is the abſurdeſt thing imaginable for you to be deſtitute hereof. No great wonder to ſee an unback't *Colt* to winch and curvet at the ſpur or whip, but if the old tryed *Beaſt* do ſo, he is better *fed* than *taught*. No, you ſhould be *Patterns of Patience* to others. We may well feel things as *Mortal men*, (ſaith Mr. *Hooper*) yet overcome them as *Chriſtian men*. Outward Afflictions may prick us, but yet they ſhould not pierce us. The *Old Soldier* will not fret at hard Marches, hard Weather, hard Uſage, for he hath been beaten to them: The *Old Mariner* repines not at the boiſterous Winds, or the threatning Waves. You are too *Nice* my Brother, ſaith *Hierom*, if you grudge to be *Tried below*, yet expect to be *Crown'd above*.

Labour therefore to get and increaſe your ſtock of *Patience*: *Let Patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and intire, wanting nothing*, Jam. 1. 4. This Grace you will daily need, and

daily uſe. For we *have need of Patience, that after we have done the Will of God, we may receive the Promiſe*, Heb. 10. 36. It will be like a *Buckler*, to ſave you harmleſs from the evil of Affliction: Though you have Faith, Vertue, Knowledge, Temperance, yet ye muſt add unto theſe *Patience*, *that ye may never fall*, 2 *Pet.* 1. 6. This will not only bridle your *Tongue*, but quiet your *Mind*, and keep you, when diſpoſſeſt of all other things, in poſſeſſion of your own Souls y: For an impatient man, whilſt he is afflicted by another, even then puniſhes himſelf, and ſo is his own greateſt tormenter. Alas! you muſt ſtill expect a ſucceſſion of troubles, and unexpected croſſes, until your Courſe be finiſhed; and if you eſcape theſe from abroad, yet you may find occaſion enough for your *Patience* with your own *Children* and *Servants*, and perhaps with *nearer Relations*; and though you ſhould miſs of theſe, yet your own *Diſtempers* will try your *Patience*; when you can neither eat your meat, nor live without it; neither ſleep with refreſhment, nor lye awake with eaſe; neither endure company, nor be contented alone; when you will be weary of every place, of every

y *Patientia iram temperat, linguam frænat, mentem gubernat, pacem cuſtodit.* Cyprian.

every poſture, and without *Patience*, weary of your ſelf: And therefore it greatly concerns you to ſtore your ſelves with this needful, this uſeful Grace.

And to that End, Inure your ſelves unto it *by degrees*: Strive to digeſt *leſſer* wrongs, provocations and loſſes, which will prepare you to be quiet under *greater*. Whilſt others are endeavouring to out-wit, or out-power their adverſaries, be you labouring to overcome your own reſentments, to conquer your ſelves: And then ſet before you that mirrour of *Patience*, the *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, who alwayes had *Right* and *Power* on his ſide, and yet patiently bore the anger of God, the reproaches of Men, and the rage of Devils. It is reported of that noble *Elziarius*, that he would ſet himſelf to think of the Injuries done to *Chriſt*, 'till he was fully contented to digeſt his own: For alas, each of us deſerves infinitely greater, and yet we ſuffer infinitely leſs than *He* did. And this prevailed with the *Apoſtle James* and other *Martyrs* to expreſs ſuch Patience at their Sufferings, that even *that* convinced ſome of their very Perſecutors to declare themſelves *Chriſtians*. Above all, *Pray* earneſtly to him who is called,

ed, *Rom.* 15. 5. the *God of Patience*, for a ſufficient portion of this *Grace*: No *Philoſophical* Arguments will compoſe the Mind like the Grace of God. I have read of a *Learned Man*, it was *Juſtus Lipſius*, that being on his Death-bed, *One* of his Friends told him, it was needleſs to ſuggeſt arguments of *Patience* to him that was ſo well read in the Writings of the *Stoicks*; thereupon, inſtead of an anſwer, turns him to God, ſaying, *Da mihi, Domine Jeſu, patientiam Chriſtianam*; *Lord Jeſus beſtow upon me the Chriſtian Patience!* So will your Burdens be tolerable, your Life amiable, your Relations comfortable, your Mind calm, and your Body eaſie.

## SECT. V.

§ 5. Stedfaſtneſs.

THE *Fifth Excellency* that doth or ſhould adorn *Old-age*, is *Stedfaſtneſs*: Which is a fixed *ſettledneſs* of the Soul, influencing our *Life* and *Actions*; and is oppos'd to that *Levity* and *Inconſtancy* which is incident to young perſons. The *Aged* man is *Stedfaſt* in his *Mind* and *Judgment*, and not eaſily unhinged

hinged there; he is *Fixed* in his *Will*, and not eaſily charm'd or drawn from his well-choſen Objects. In reſpect of God and the things of *Religion*, a perſon in years is or ſhould be like a *Rock*, unmoveable, not like the *Ship* that is toſſed to and fro. Having conſidered and weighed their *Principles*, no worldly conſideration, no plauſible harangues, no loſs or puniſhment will induce them eaſily to alter the ſame. In reſpect of *Others*, their *Friendſhip* being grounded upon a firm bottom is conſtant, and they have learned to overlook ordinary failings, and to put the beſt ſenſe on the words and actions of a *Friend*. So likewiſe their *Conjugal Love*, though the frothy *fondneſs* of it be worn off, yet the ſtrength and *ſubſtance* of it is unqueſtionable and unalterable. And then as to *Themſelves*, their *Paſſions* are by long endeavours ſo moderated and regulated, that as their temper is far more even and uniform, than once it was; ſo alſo their *Actions* and courſe of life are more ſteady and conſiſtent, than in the dayes of their Vanity.

I will not contend that *all Aged* People excell in this *Stedfaſtneſs*, eſpecially when *Dotage* invades *Old-age*; but that generally

rally it is ſo, and univerſally it ſhould be ſo; and particular exceptions do always confirm general concluſions: Nor do I conclude that all young People are light and inconſtant, but it is too manifeſt to be denyed, that *Childhood* and *Youth* have uſually the large *Sails*, but *Old-age* hath the ſolid *Ballaſt*, and and therefore doth ſail more ſteadily and more ſafely. Every Wind will make impreſſion on the Young Tree, but the *Old Oak* ſtands firm againſt the Storms. The young *Horſe* may go more *nimbly*, but the tried Beaſt goes more *ſtedfaſtly* and *ſurely*. Youth is the *unſettled* age; the Head unſettled, the Heart unſettled, and the Life unſettled. When the *Wiſe man* exhorts to *remember our Creator in the days of our Youth*, Eccleſ. 12. 1. that *word Youth* comes of a root ſignifying *Choice*; which ſeems to imply, that Youth is a time wherein Perſons are *undetermined*; they have their Religion, their Relations, their Vocation to chooſe; but when a man is crown'd with years, then he is in a *ſettled* eſtate: Settled in Judgment, ſettled in his Purpoſes, ſettled in his Practice, and commonly ſettled in his Comfort: When the Apoſtle *Paul* was near his End, then he could ſay,

ſay, 2 *Tim.* 1. 12 *I know whom I have believed, and I am perſwaded,* &c.

For indeed the *Conſtitution* and Temper of the *Aged* diſpoſeth them hereunto: Their Sanguine and *Mercurial* days are done; their Phlegm and *Melancholy* further their Stedfaſtneſs, either in good or evil. They have ſeen the World, the vanities and varieties of men and things, of opinions and practices, they have *tried all things*, and therefore are likelier to *hold faſt that which is good.* And as there is a weariſomneſs of the Body, ſo there is a certain wearineſs of the Mind, which makes it deſirous to be fixt, and to be at reſt. And having often heard, read and pondered the things of Religion, and alſo taſted the real comfort and ſweetneſs in them, they are not eaſily either flatter'd, or frighted out of them. Their approach to *Death* adds alſo to their *Conſtancy*; why ſhould they through *fear* recede from their *Principles*, that in a ſhort time muſt *dye* of neceſſity? Hence that ſaying of Archbiſhop *Whitgift*, *Two* things help men to be reſolute in a *good Cauſe*, namely *Old-age* and *Want of Iſſue.* And it is recorded, that when all the City of *Athens* yielded to the Tyranny of *Piſiſtratus*, *Solon* only

only oppos'd him; and being interrogated by him, what made him have ſuch Confidence, he anſwer'd, *It was his Old-age:* He knew the *Tyrant* could not deſpiſe him of many years; and he that cannot loſe many years, needs not fear other loſſes; and ſo may well be ſtedfaſt and unmovable in his Duty.

Let it be your Care therefore to be *rooted* and grounded in the *Principle* and *Practice* of true *Piety:* Be not like *Children toſſed too and fro with every wind of Doctrine.* It is an arrant ſhame for you that are *Old,* to have your *Religion* to chuſe, or to change it every month: It is not for you to follow faſhions in Religion: But you ſhould be *rooted and built up in Chriſt, and ſtabliſhed in the Faith as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving,* Coloſ. 2. 7. *Ability* and *Stability* ſhould be your peculiar honour. Young Perſons may have a *land-flood* of Devotion and Zeal: You ought to paſs like a ſtill and conſtant *River*; you ſhould be *conſtant* in Prayer, in Watchfulneſs, in Charity, *&c.* While the goodneſs of many young People is *as a morning cloud,* and as *the early dew that paſſeth away*; your path ſhould be as the *ſhining light,* that *ſhineth more and more unto the perfect*

*perfect day.* As the the motion of *natural bodies*, when they approach their *center*, is more *ſwift*; ſo your motions ſhould withal be more *ſteady.* It was no honour to that *Noble Marqueſs* [z], who being askt how he could maintain his ſtanding in the reign of *four Princes*, who alſo were of different Sentiments in *Religion*, to return this *Anſwer*; he perform'd it by imitating the twining *Willow*, and not the ſturdy *Oak.* No, it is impoſſible to be *upright* without *Courage* [a]. That's the happy man, either young or old, who is like *Athanaſius, Magnes & Adamas*; of a temper and converſe to attract Love and Reſpect; and yet of Principles and Reſolutions to withſtand, in a good cauſe, all oppoſition. The weakneſs of your Limbs and Senſes, ſhould be compenſated with ſtability and ſtrength in your Spirit. The *Aged mind* alone grows young [b]. *We faint not*, ſaith the *Apoſtle*, but *as the outward man periſheth, ſo ſhould your inward man be renewed day by day*, 2 Cor. 4. 16.

For this purpoſe, you ſhould *weigh* and examine your *Principles* well. Thoſe of *Religion*, by the Rule of the *Scriptures*; thoſe of *humane Life*, in the ſcales of *Reaſon*;

z He dyed at 107 years, having lived in nine Kings and Queens reigns.

a *Pius eſſe nequit, qui non eſt fortis*, Dr. Sanderſon.

b *Sola mens ſenectutis juveneſcit.* Plutarch.

*Reaſon*: and having once well fixt them, alter them not upon every Suggeſtion. The manifeſt cauſe of moſt mens *Unſtedfaſtneſs*, both in *Judgment* and *Practice*, is their raſh embracing of thoſe *Points* that ſhould have been well weighed at the firſt: for what they have ſwallowed down by *Wholeſale*, they will Vomit up again by *Retail* in time of tryal. My *Lord Verulam*'s obſervation is very true, *He that begins in doubts, will end in certainties; and he that begins in certainties, will end in doubts.* Add to this, a conſcionable *Practice* of your ſound and honeſt *Principles* †. This will acquaint you with that comfort and ſweetneſs, which will ſtabliſh your mind in them more and more. A *rotten Heart* is apt to produce a *giddy Head*; whereas *righteouſneſs* both *directs*, and *keeps* him that is *upright* in the way, *Prov.* 11. 5. with *chap.* 13. 6. All the *parts* and *learning* in the World will not fix the Head and Heart, like *Sincerity*: It is *good that the Heart be eſtabliſhed with Grace*, Heb. 13. 9. Experience in Religion, will make you ſtedfaſt in Religion. And laſtly, *Pray* earneſtly unto God to make you ſtedfaſt. See how *emphatically* the *Apoſtle Paul* mentions

† Πεῖρα διὰ βεβαίας θεωρίας. Nazian.

mentions this, 2 *Theſ.* 2. 17. *Now our Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, and God even our Father—ſtabliſh you.* For we are weak *Creatures*, yea, Knowledge and Grace are but *Creatures*; but earneſt Prayer will ingage the help and ſupport of *Almighty God*, who can and will *ſtabliſh*, *ſtrengthen*, *ſettle you*, 1 Pet. 5. 10.

## SECT. VI.

§ 6. Temperance.

THE *Sixth Grace* wherein *Old-age* doth or ſhould excell, is *Temperance and Sobriety* [c]. That's the *Injunction* of the *Apoſtle*, *Tit.* 2. 2. *That the Aged men be ſober, grave, temperate.* By this *Temperance*, I underſtand that Fruit of the *Spirit* which bridleth our inordinate affections in all outward mercies; or more ſtrictly, which obſerves a right mean in deſiring, and uſing the *Pleaſures of the Senſes*: and ſo in reſpect of *Meat*, it is *Abſtinence*; in reſpect of *Drinking*, *Sobriety*: in reſpect of other *carnal pleaſures*, *Chaſtity*. All theſe the *Temperate* man curbs by holy *Reaſon*, and by holy *Force*. Hereby he ſtiffes

[c] *Sobrietas corporis & mentis.* Rivet.

the inordinate *Deſire*, and reſtrains the *Uſe* within its due bounds; he *mortifies* the *unlawful*, and *moderates* the *lawful* pleaſures and recreations of the Body; He neither abſolutely refuſeth them, nor inordinately deſireth or uſeth them.

Now this *Grace* is very proper, tho not peculiar to *Old-age*. They *eſpecially* do or ought to excell herein. There is indeed a *Proverbial* ſaying, that *Wine is the Milk of Old-men*: ſome intemperate men there may be of every age, but *God* forbid that this *Proverb* ſhould be adæquate to *Old-age*. True it is, that where there be the *decays* of *Nature*, there is more need of reparation, and that the moſt reviving means are expedient for that end. Whereupon *Plato* permits ancient perſons to drink more liberally, to alleviate their troubles, and to ſoften their Spirits, as Iron is ſoftned by the Fire. But commonly the *Aged* are by *Gods Grace*, weaned from the exceſſes of Youth. The *Luſts of the Fleſh*, *the Luſt of the Eyes*, and the *Pride of Life* have, too uſually, their diſtinct Seaſons of *rule*, or at leaſt *moleſtation* in the Soul of man. And the *Firſt* having had its courſe in the time of Youth, its reign is expired, and the *Aged* muſt now combate the other

*Vinum lac ſenum.*

Plato *de legibus Dial.* 2.

other *Two* as well as he can. The Decays of natural ſtrength are great helps to the *Old-mans Temperance*; he cannot, if he would, Eat and Drink, and act his Luſt as heretofore; and altho this *Inability* doth not make him a *Temperate* man, yet hereby the *Diſcontinuance* of the *Acts* weaken the *Habit*; and his *contentedneſs* therewith, and his hearty *thankfulneſs* for this reformation may be accounted *real Temperance* [d]: eſpecially when he can reflect upon his former diſorders with Grief, Hatred and Shame. Now they find by experience, that a man may live more comfortably, and healthfully with leſs Meat, leſs Drink, and leſs Sleep, than young people indulge themſelves withal: and other carnal pleaſures are indifferent to them, becauſe *deſire doth fail*: and it is much better and eaſier to *want* deſires, than to fulfill them; as it is far better not to *Itch*, than to have the pleaſure of *ſcratching* where it *itcheth*.

But now the pious *Old perſon* hath really *crucified the Fleſh with the Affections and Luſts*; His Sins did not leave him, but he hath left them. They have not heard and read the *Scripture* ſo long in vain, which every where diſgraceth

d *Habeo ſenectutis magnam gratiam, quæ mihi ſermonis aviditatem auxit, potionis & cibi ſuſtulit.* Cato *in* Ciceron.

and condemneth all *exceſs and riot, all Chambering and Wantonneſs,* and obligeth all Chriſtians to *deny themſelves,* and to pluck out the *right Eye* that doth *offend* them. They have found by experience that as true *Vertue,* ſo true *Satisfaction* is only found in a *Mediocrity*; and that all extremes and inordinacies, are offenſive both to the Mind and Body. I *ſaid of Laughter, it is mad, and of Mirth, what doth it?* Eccleſ. 2. 2. This was the Verdict which wiſe *Solomon* brought in his *Old-age,* when he had *not withheld his Heart from any joy, &c.* yet then he concludes, *all was vanity and vexation of Spirit, and there was no profit under the Sun,* Eccleſ. 2. 10. Beſides, they who have lived long, have ſeen the woful *Effects* of Drunkenneſs, Uncleanneſs, and Luxury; how many *Bodies* they have deſtroyed, how many *Eſtates* and *Families* they have ruined, and what ſmall pity the miſerable Spend-thrift meets with in thoſe perſons and places, where he hath conſumed his ſubſtance. Theſe and ſuch like obſervations have contributed to the *Aged* mans *Sobriety,* they have been *Pillars of Salt* to him.

So that any *Licenciouſneſs* in a perſon of *Years,* as it is moſt *pernicious* to him, ſo

ſo it is *intolerable* to him. It makes them the objects both of *laughter*, *ſcorn*, and *deteſtation*. Every *exceſs* in them debilitates their *Nature*, ſullies their *Reputation*, and ſhakes their *Grace* exceedingly. When *Old people* fall, they fall with a great *weight*, and are cruſh'd more than younger people, and perhaps they have more difficulty to *riſe* again. Far more *excuſes* are found for the Lapſes of *young* people, than can be pretended by the *Aged*; their faults are *crimes*, and their crimes are *prodigies* [c]. As their *Diſeaſes*, ſo their *Exorbitances* are far more dangerous.

Let it therefore be your conſtant care to keep your ſelves within the bounds of *Temperance* and *Sobriety*. And that both for *Others* ſakes, and for your *Own*. You ſhould be *examples*, O be not *ſtumbling Blocks* to younger people. Your vices may propagate when your perſons are paſt it; and thoſe that are *Eye* or *Ear-witneſſes* of your follies, may derive the practice of them to the Child that is yet unborn; and altho you may recover by true *Repentance*, yet they may ſtumble upon you, and fall and never riſe again. Entail not a Curſe upon your *Poſterity*, do not nouriſh in them,

[c] *Amor in puero, pudor; in virgine, rubor; in fœminâ, furor; in juvene, ardor; in ſene, riſus.* Epictet.

that *natural* depravation, which in equity you ought rather to cure. And for your *Own* ſake be *ſober*, be *vigilant*; for you are upon the confines of the everlaſting World; a World wherein all *ſenſual* enjoyments will be for ever out of date; endeavour to go off the Stage without a *Blemiſh*. When ſome *Courtiers* were ſent to Sr *Fr. Walſingham*, being ſick and ſad, to make him *merry*, "*God*, ſaid "he, is ſerious in his Law, *Jeſus Chriſt* "was ſerious in his Death, the *Holy Ghoſt* "is ſerious in his dealing with our Souls, "all in Heaven and Hell are ſerious, and "ſhall a Man that hath one Foot in the "Grave, *Laugh and Jeſt*? Take warning by poor *Noah*, *One hours Drunkenneſs* diſcovered that, which *Six hundred years Sobriety* had concealed. If his *inexperience* did in any degree excuſe him, you can make no ſuch *pretence*. If you have any regard to the Health and Vigour of your *Bodies*, to the quiet and welfare of your *Souls*, to the pleaſing and honouring of *God*, bridle your appetite and check the pleaſures of your Senſes. In ſhort, there is, as we obſerved before, no better way to ſpin out your lives, to make *Old-age* pleaſant, and Death eaſie, than the exerciſe of this

this Vertue. The inſtance of *Cornaro* a learned and rich *Venetian* is common, that with a ſparing and orderly Diet lived to a great Age with little inconvenience. To *deny* a mans ſelf, is the way to *pleaſe* himſelf at length; and by oppoſing the *preternatural* deſires of the Body, we contribute to the *true* happineſs even of the Body it ſelf.

And here comes in the uſe and exerciſe of *Mortification*, wherein tho a *wiſe man* may make ſome ſteps, yet the work cannot be done without the aſſiſtance of *Gods Holy Spirit*. *If ye through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the Body, ye ſhall live*, Rom. 8. 13. Implore therefore the aid of this good *Spirit*, who can make you mortally to *hate* that which you now do ardently *love*; and will pluck up the *roots* of that, whereof Morality doth only ſhave the *Hair*. Set the Spectacle of *Death* oft before you, and of that *endleſs Eſtate* to which you are ſuch near Neighbours; and think how unſuitable a *vain life* is, to a *ſerious Death*. Be much in *Prayer*, and if need be add *Faſting* thereunto, that your *moderation may be known unto all men*, ſeeing undoubtedly to *Old* people, *The Lord is at hand*.

## SECT. VII.

§ 7. Love. THE *Seventh Grace* proper for *Old-age*, is *Charity* or *Love*. Not that *ſenſual* or *carnal Love* which is proper or rather common to *Youth*, and which hath long ſince dropt off, like Leaves, in the *Autumn* of their Age; but that *Grace* which diſpoſeth the Heart to *think* the beſt, the Tongue to *ſpeak* the beſt, and the whole man to *promote* the *Welfare* of *Others*. The *Seat* or chief *Manſion* of this, is the *Heart*, which being filled with this *Grace*, it is diffuſed every way, and the whole man is tinctur'd with it. It obligeth a man to *Think* the beſt of every man. *Charity thinketh no evil, believeth all things, hopeth all things, beareth all things.* By this we are ready to account the *Certain good* things in Others, *better* than they are; the *certain Evils* in others, *leſs* than they are; the *good* that is but *doubtful* in others, *certain*; *and doubtful Evils*, *none* [f]. And it reſts not in *Opinion*, but works by *Deſire*, whereby the Heart doth unfeignedly deſire the *Temporal*, *Spiritual* and *Eter-*

[f] *Charitas dicit aliorum bona certa, meliora; certa mala, minora; bona dubia, certa; dubia mala, nulla.*

*Eternal* good of all men. Neither doth it reſt there, but ſhews it ſelf in *Endeavour*, and that both by *Word* and *Deed*; ſpeaking *To* them, *Of* them, *For* them to *God* and man what may conduce thereunto; in their Lips is the *Law of kindneſs*. *Charity vaunteth not it ſelf, is not puffed up, doth not behave it ſelf unſeemly, is not eaſily provoked*, 1 Cor. 13. 5. Neither will *Words* ſatisfie it, but doth actually help and cheerfully ſuccour every Body, as their occaſion requires, and his ownability extends.

And in this *Grace* doth every *good Old* Man and Woman excell. This was the eminent *Grace* of the *Evangeliſt John* in his *Old-age*, for he lived longer than any of the *Apoſtles*; and his Swan-like Song ſtill was *Love*, as is evident in all his *Epiſtles*: yea, ſome *Church Hiſtorians* affirm, that when he could go no longer by reaſon of his *Age* into the *Chriſtian Aſſemblies*; yet he was inſtant to be led or carried there, where the ſubſtance of what he was able to ſay, was, *little Children, love one another*. And you may find, how pathetical was *Paul the Aged* in his tender charity to *Oneſimus*, Philem. 9. *Being ſuch a one as Paul the Aged, for loves ſake I beſeech thee for my Son Oneſimus.*

*Oneſimus.* And this Spirit did continue in the *Ancient Chriſtians* in the *Primitive* times g, who loved, as *Tertullian* tells us, as Brethren, and were ready to dye for one another. We that did hate one another, ſaith *Juſtin Martyr*, now do live familiarly together, and do pray for our Enemies. In all Ages, as men have increaſed in *Piety*, they have increaſed in *Charity*, and come to relent of their rigour and keenneſs. It was *Age*, *Experience* and *Conſideration*, as well as a *Priſon* that melted *Biſhop Ridley* to accoſt his *Brother Hooper* in this manner: "However in ſome by-"matters and circumſtances of *Religion*, "your *wiſdom* and my *Simplicity* hath a "little jarred, yet now I ſincerely love "and imbrace you. You know *Rehoboams Old Counſellours* were for *lenity*, when the young were *ſtern* and *furious*. It's true, the natural tempers or painful diſtempers, may incline ſome *Old* people to too much *Acrimony*; yet all *Aged* people that are conſiderate, have taken more degrees in *Charity*, than young people have. It was an Old man in *Gibeah* that had more of this Grace, than all the City beſides, *Judg.* 19. 16.

g *Occultis ſe notis noſcunt & amant mutuò penè antequam noverint.* Min. Fel.

For beſides the advantage they have had

had of Gods holy *Ordinances*, the Scope whereof is to increaſe our *Faith* and *Love* [h]; they have found by experience, that the *Life* and *Soul* of *Religion* lies not in theſe leſſer matters, that have cauſed the greateſt noiſe in the World; that every *difference* in Religion makes not a *different* Religion: ſo that whereſoever they ſee *any thing of Chriſt*, theſe they love. Their Conſciouſneſs of their own *miſtakes*, and of their own *imperfections*, hath forced them to more charitable thoughts of others. They have obſerved, that true Grace hath lived in the midſt of great *infirmities*; yea, they have found this *Flower* in divers perſons, where they thought there had been nothing but *Weeds*. Being converſant moſt at home in their *own Souls*, they have in their long experience diſcovered ſo much Vanity and Iniquity there, that they are are very charitable *Judges of all other* perſons. They grow like the famous *Pliny*, who ſo paſt by others offences, as if himſelf had been the greateſt offender; and yet was ſo ſevere to himſelf, as if he would pardon no body: their *Charity covers a multitude of Sins*. In ſhort, their *Age* and *Afflictions* have ſo happily humbled them, that they

h *Principium vitæ, fides; finis, charitas: hæc duo perficiunt Dei hominem.* Ignatius.

they are ready to eſteem every one better than themſelves; and ſo they are far from that uncharitable *Cenſoriouſneſs*, which tears mens Names in pieces, and keeps up a continual civil War among mankind.

And then for other *Acts of Charity*, who ſhould be more ready to Give *a part*, than they that know they muſt ſhortly leave the *whole*? who ſhould be good in his *Stewardſhip*, but he that is *ſure* he muſt ſhortly be out of it? But the nobleſt *Charity* is that which reſpects the *Soul*, which conſiſts in *Counſelling*, *Perſwading*, *Reproving* and *Praying* for Others. And *Old-age* is evidently qualified for theſe above the young. Their *Wiſdom* and *Authority* gives them a great advantage herein: and they have found, by experience, that ſometimes a word of good Counſel and charitable Reproof, *fitly ſpoken, hath been like Apples of Gold.* And then for *Prayer*, it is obſerved that the Charity of young perſons therein, doth begin and end at *themſelves*; whereas the Prayers of the Aged are much imployed for the good of *others*. Few Children pray for their *Parents*, as the Parents pray for their *Children*. Yea, they have learned to love and pray for their

their *Enemies*, as well as for their *Friends*; and for the *ungodly*, as well as for the *godly*. And the pooreſt *Old* Man or Woman may be rich, in theſe acts of *Charity*.

Therefore as *ye abound in every thing, in faith, in utterance and knowledge, ſee that ye abound in this Grace of Charity alſo*. It is the *Apoſtles* Exhortation, 2 *Cor.* 8. 7. We uſe to ſay, that in Winter the natural heat retreats inward, and there reſides about the vital parts: ye that are in the *winter quarter* of your life, let this *warm Grace* dwell richly in your Hearts, and then it will influence all your words and actions. It is the *Image* of *God*, for *God is Love*; it is the fulfilling of the *Law*, and it is the great command of the *Goſpel*; and tho you have Knowledge, Faith, Wiſdom, Riches, *&c.* yet if you have not *Charity*, you are nothing. You are going out of the World, now is your time to exerciſe this *Grace*. In the World where you are going, there will be no infirmities to cover, no poor to relieve, no injuries to forgive, no ignorant perſons to inſtruct, no miſerable Creature to pray for: and you have but a *ſhort time* for theſe imployments. Yea, perhaps you are

are reprieved all this while for theſe Services; and to be uſeful in theſe and ſuch like ways is the greateſt happineſs on Earth, it is the next ſtep to eternal Glory. Yea, nothing ſhould hire an *Old* perſon, or make him content to live out of Heaven with ſuch a Body of Sin about him, but only that they may do *God* and *Man* that ſervice, which cannot be done in *Heaven*.

And for the obtaining this ſweet *Grace*, the *Scripture* tells us, that it is a *Fruit of the Spirit*, *Gal.* 5. 22. and *there* it is ranked in the *firſt* place: It muſt be ſought then in the *Word of God*, which is the *vehicle* of the *Spirit*; where, it being carefully read and heard, we ſhall find an account of the infinite *love of God* to us, and of the ſtupendous *love of Chriſt*. There we ſhall diſcern how nearly we are related to all men, eſpecially to all *Chriſtians*, and how unnatural it is for *one hand* to be unkind to *the other*. And in ſhort, we ſhall there find, that Love and Charity is ſtill the Character of good men, and hatred and uncharitableneſs of the bad. And you muſt beg this Grace of God, that the *Spirit of Love*, would plant this Grace of *Love* in your Hearts.

Hearts. You will feel your hearts warming as you are praying, and the Lord will fill you with this *Charity which is the bond of perfectneſs.*

And ſo I have done with the *Vertues* and *Excellencies* of *Old-age:* Whereby you may perceive that all *Old* things are not to be caſt away: But as *Old Wood* is beſt to burn, *Old Wine* beſt to drink, *Old Authors* beſt to read, and *Old Friends* beſt to truſt; ſo *Old People*, if they have improved their *Time* aright, are good for ſomething[i]; yea are eminently good for their *Knowledge*, for their *Faith*, for their *Wiſdom*, for their *Patience*, for their *Stedfaſtneß*, for their *Temperance*, and for their *Charity*. And ſo much for the *Fourth Point* concerning *Old-age*, viz. The *Graces* moſt proper for it.

[i] Old *Fiſh*, old *Oil*, and an old *Friend* are beſt. *Ital.* Proverb.

CHAP.

## CHAP. V.

### *The* Inconveniences *of* Old-age.

*Cap. 5.* The Inconveniences of Old-age.

I Am come now in the *Fifth* place to examine the *Inconveniences* and *Diſadvantages* of *Old-age*; adding withall ſomewhat towards the *Mitigation* thereof, as I paſs along. Some here ſet themſelves with immoderate vehemence to cry down *Old-age*, and to load it with ſuch intolerable *Miſeries*, as might affright one: And to this purpoſe they muſter all the *Evils* which are either the effect of mens *Vices*, or other ſeparable *Accidents* of their *Age*, and put all theſe upon its ſcore to inflame the reckoning [k]: Inſomuch that ſome of the *Old Philoſophers* took upon them to quarrel with *Providence*, for giving man Life, and thereby involving him in a continual ſtate of *miſery*. And all this, partly out of their *Ignorance* of mans *Primitive happineſs*, and *woful fall*, and partly out of their dim-ſightedneſs about his *endleſs felicity*; about all which *material points*

k *Malè a particulari ad univerſale argumentantur nec diſtinguere volunt aut valent interea quæ propriè ſenectuti conveniunt & ea quæ ei ex accidenti adveniunt; & quæ omnibus vitæ gradibus aut communia ſunt aut non infrequentia.* Rivet *de ſen. bonâ.*

*points* they lived in great uncertainty.

Others on the *Contrary* have been ready ſo to mince the matter, as if there were nothing in *Old-age*, but what is *deſirable*, guilding its hairs and ſmoothing all its wrinkles; as if the Spiritual *advantage* did annihilate the corporal *burdens*. The *truth* dwells, as I conceive, between theſe *extremes*: And it muſt be granted, that as the dreggs of the pureſt Wines are left in the bottom, ſo *Old-age* hath many *Inconveniences* peculiar to it[l]; for which cauſe thoſe dayes are called *Evil dayes*, wherein the man hath *no pleaſure*, or with which he is *greatly diſpleaſed*[m], Eccleſ. 12. 1. But yet the ſame *Old-age* hath divers *Priviledges* to ballance them; and their preſſures are not properly *Miſeries*, becauſe there is abundance of *Comfort*, and *Benefit*, which mitigate them[n].

We have an Elegant *Deſcription* of many of them in that *Twelfth* Chapter of *Eccleſiaſtes*, verſ. 2, 3, *&c.* Then *the Sun*, and *the Light*, and *the Moon*, and *the Stars will be darkned*; that is, all *Outward Comfort* or *Proſperity*, whether by *Day* or by *Night* will be eclypſed and withdrawn from us: And *the clouds will return after the rain*, that is, one *bo-*

l *Senectus mare malorum.* Plaut.

m *Extremè displicent.* Geier. *in loc.*

n *Miſeria eſt copia tribulationis & inopia conſolationis.*

*dily Diſtemper* and *outward Trouble* will ſucceſſively follow another. Then will *the keepers of the houſe tremble*, that is, the *arms* and *hands* which defend the Body, will by reaſon of their cold and dry temper, *ſhake* and *quiver*. And *the ſtrong men will bow themſelves*, that is, the *thighs* and *leggs*, which have ſtrongly born up the ſtructure of the Body, will be *weak*, and need the ſupport of a *ſtaff* to aſſiſt them. And *the grinders will ceaſe, becauſe they are few*, that is, the *Teeth* which *chew* and *grind* our meat, will break, rot, and fall out, ſo that being reduced to a *few*, they will be unable to do their office. And *thoſe that look out of the windows, will be darkened*, that is, the *Eye-ſights* will fail, the *Organs* of the Eye, through which, as through a window, the *Soul looks* out, being dried up and weakned. And *the doors ſhall be ſhut in the ſtreets*, that is, the *Lips* and *Mouth* will be diſabled from *ſpeaking*, or *eating*. When *the ſound of the grinding is low*, that is, *Digeſtion* which is furthered by *chewing*, and perfected in *Chylification*, *Sanguification*, &c. will be *obſtructed*. And *he ſhall riſe up at the voyce of the bird*, that is, our *Sleep* will be ſo *ſhallow*, that the leaſt *noiſe* will

will awake us, and ſo *ſhort*, that it will prevent the *Cock-crowing*. And *all the daughters of muſick ſhall be brought low*, that is, our *Ears* will grow *dull*, ſo that as we *cannot* ſo we *care not* for the ſweeteſt *muſick*. Alſo *they ſhall be afraid of that which is high*, that is, we ſhall by reaſon of *wearineſs*, *dizzineſs*, or *ſhort-windedneſs*, be afraid of mounting up to *high places*, and attempting ſuch *high things*, as in youth we adventured upon. And *fears ſhall be in the way*, that is, we ſhall be afraid of and in our *Journeying*, leſt we *daſh* our weak and *weary foot* againſt a ſtone. And *the almond-tree ſhall flouriſh*, that is, our *Head* will grow *hoary*, like the *almond tree* which ſoon ripens. And *the graſhopper ſhall be a burden*, that is, the *leaſt weight* ſhall *load* our infirm Body; yea we being then like enough to *graſhoppers*, will grow burdens to *our ſelves* and others. And *deſire ſhall fail*, that is, our *Appetite* to *meat*, and our *deſire* to *Marriage-imbraces* will be *cooled* and *ceaſe* by degrees. At length *the ſilver cord will be looſed*, that is, the *Chine-bone* with its *marrow*, and the *Nerves* and *Fibres* thereunto belonging will be *reſolved* and weakned. And *the golden bowl will be broken*,

that is, the *veſſel* and *membrane* that contains the *Brain*, which is aptly called *golden*, both for its *colour* and *value*, will at laſt be *ſhattered*. And *the pitcher will be broken at the fountain*, that is, the Veins will ceaſe from doing their office, at the *right Ventricle* of the *Heart*, which is the *fountain of life*, and ſo our *blood ſtagnating* we are ſoon extinguiſhed. And *the wheel will be broken at the ciſtern*, that is, the *great Artery* which is knit to the *left ſide* of the *Heart*, by which the *Blood* is *derived* into the parts, ceaſes its action and the *Pulſe* with it, which are the immediate forerunners of *Death*. And then *the Duſt returns to the Earth as it was, and the ſpirit returns unto God who gave it*. Thus you ſee Mans *Body*, like ſome curious *Edifice*, firſt battered by various *Storms*, at length the *Roof* and *Walls* decay, and at laſt *falls* to the ground, but our *Bleſſed Redeemer* hath provided for the *Inhabitant* an *houſe not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens*.

SECT.

## SECT. I.

AND now let us more *diſtinctly* ſurvey the *Inconveniences* of *Old-age*; the chief whereof are theſe following. §. 1. It is deprived of Pleaſures.

*Firſt*, The *Aged are Deprived of many Pleaſures.* They cannot divert themſelves by Hunting, Hawking, Fiſhing: They can neither well *ride* abroad, nor *walk* about home. They have done with *Viſits*, and *Feaſts*, and *Muſick*: All the recreations of *ſenſe* are generally taſtleſs to them. Yea, they have ſcarce any pleaſure in their *meat*, and *drink*, and *ſleep*: So that their Condition ſeems to be ſad and lamentable. And we have the ſubſtance of all this confeſſed by an *Old man* himſelf, namely *Barzillai*, 2 Sam. 19. 35. *I am this day fourſcore years old; and can thy ſervant taſt what I eat, or what I drink? can I hear any more the voyce of ſinging men and ſinging women? q. d.* Theſe things will ſignifie nothing to me; they have forſaken me, and I value them as little. Here you have the Verdict which *Barzillai* brings in the Caſe. Yea inſtead of *Pleaſure*, a conſtant *Sadneſs*

takes place in their Countenance without, and, as may be judged, in their Hearts within. *Sobs* and *ſighs* are the accent of their language, and their complaints are frequently mixt with *tears*. Their Condition then muſt needs be miſerable, when they have ſuch conſtant heavineſs *within*, and no recreation *without* to alleviate it. *Company* burdens them, and *Solitarineſs* ſaddens them. Yea they are loth that any body ſhould be *merry* about them: So that they ſeem to lead a *dolorous* life, and to be eſtranged from all manner of Pleaſure.

Now *Pleaſure* is the *life* of Life: What is Life without Delight? why do men toyl to get Eſtates, but for the *pleaſure* they take in them? why do others hunt for Applauſe, and climb for Honour, but to *pleaſe* their fancy and their humour? even the Schollar would take leave of his Books, if he had not *Delight* in them: So that *Pleaſure* acts all mankind, and rules the world. Now thoſe years are lamentable, wherein a man ſhall ſay, *I have no pleaſure in them.* And this makes ſome *Old* People weary of their lives, they reckon that a Life ſtript of joy and comfort, is not worth the keeping.

Never-

Nevertheleſs, *Old-age* may ſupport it ſelf very well under this *Inconvenience*: Inaſmuch, as the *Pleaſures* they are deprived of, are *in themſelves* and *to their experience*, dangerous Injoyments: For nothing is more apt to diſorder and ſully the Soul, than *carnal Pleaſure*. Thoſe very *Recreations* which may be harmleſs in themſelves, yet too commonly lead to *Intemperance*, to *Laſciviouſneſs*, to *Quarrels*, and other *miſchiefs*. Now if a Diſh be never ſo *palatable*, yet if there be but *danger* of Poyſon in it, no wiſe man will meddle with it: Therefore *Tully* brings in *Cato* congratulating with himſelf, that he was delivered from the *ſlavery of Pleaſure*, and concludes, that it is a ſingular *Priviledge* of *Old-age*, that it frees us from that which is moſt *pernicious* in youth [o]. And whatever regard weak men may have to theſe Vanities, the wiſeſt among the very *Heathens* have concluded, that there is no plague ſo deadly to man as the *pleaſures of the body* [p]. And that comes to paſs through the *depravation* of our Natures, whereby we can hardly enjoy them, but we run mad upon them; we exceed the *limits*, and miſs the *ends* which ſhould be obſerved in the uſing of them. Where-

o *Magnum munus ſenectutis eſt, quod id nobis auſert, quod in adoleſcentia eſt vitioſiſſimum.* Cicer.

p *Nulla capitalior peſtis eſt, quam corporis voluptas.* Architas Tarent.

fore *Cicero* tells of *Sophocles*, who being ask'd, whether he did ſtill converſe with *Womankind*, anſwered, *The Gods have done better for me, I have willingly left that furious Maſter* q. Indeed the greateſt part of the *Pleaſures* aforeſaid, do belong only to the *brutal* part of man, and conſequently the defect of them little concerns the *Rational* Creature. For, as a late *worthy Author* r ſaith, None can think *God* ſo unkind to his own Image in humane nature, as in diſpenſing Felicity to aſſign the larger ſhare to the *Beaſt*. No, all theſe ſenſual *Pleaſures* are ſo *diſtracting*, or ſo *fulſome*, or ſo *tranſient*, that the utmoſt fruition of them, cannot make a man happy, nor the want of them miſerable. And this is the more Evident, in that the *wiſeſt* men have found the *greateſt Pleaſure*, in refuſing thoſe pleaſures; and as an *Epicure* hath *eaten* for his pleaſure, ſo many an *Abſtemious* man hath profeſt, that he hath *forborn* for his pleaſure alſo.

Again, as the *Aged* perſon is deprived of theſe *Pleaſures*, ſo he is freed from any *Deſires* after them. As his ſenſual *Delights* fail, ſo his *Deſires* to them fail alſo. As he hath not the Pleaſure of *Scratching*,

q Dii meliora libenter iſtinc tanquam a Domino furioſo profugi. Cicer. *de ſenect.*

r Gentlemans Calling.

*Scratching*, ſo he is free from the trouble of *Itching*, and what man ever complains of ſuch a want? We are never moleſted by the *want* of any thing, which we do *not deſire*[f]. Neither is *Old-age* without it's particular *Pleaſures*. *Tully* tells us of divers *Old-men*, that diverted themſelves with great delight in their *Studies*. And for thoſe that have any ſmattering of *Learning*, there is no *Earthly* Pleaſure comparable to that of penetrating into the works of *Creation* and *Providence*, of obſerving the *Natures*, *Cauſes*, and *Effects* of thoſe things, the *Surface* whereof only is known to younger people.

[f] *Nihil autem moleſtum, quod non deſideramus: Non caret is, qui non deſiderat.* Cicer.

Furthermore, the *Religious Old* perſon hath an unexpreſſible *Pleaſure* in the *Reflexion* of a *well-ſpent Life*, and upon the various *Preſervations* and *Deliverances*, which the *Lord* hath vouchſafed him, out of many *Temptations* and *Afflictions*. They have alſo the ſolid *comfort* of ſeeing their *Poſterity* grow up in the endowments of *Mind*, *Body* or *Eſtate*; and ſo of a *Generation* after them to ſerve and honour God, while the World ſtands.

There are alſo ſeveral *honeſt Recreations*, in which their *Years* do not hinder them. And however, it can be no diſpa-

paragement to them, if they can take as much *Pleaſure* in *Reading* and *Meditating* upon Gods Word, as ever they did in any other *Divertiſement* whatſoever [t]. This is certain, that their *Pleaſures* are more *Pure*, more *Sound*, more *Strong*, and more *Laſting*, than the frothy and unſatisfactory pleaſures of *Senſe* and *Sin*, which are but *for a Seaſon*.

[t] Θεὸς ὃ ἀνθρώποις σώφρων νόμος· ἄφρων ὃ ἡδονή. *Plato.*

Finally, *Sickneſs* of Body or *Trouble* of Mind, to both which the Young are equally obnoxious as the Old, are able to divorce the *youngeſt* perſons from all ſenſible *Pleaſures*, and to cloath their Faces with ſadneſs: ſo that this *Inconvenience* muſt not be ſo appropriated to *Old-age*, but that any Age may partake thereof. Even St. *Auguſtine* tells us, that in his younger years, he had contracted ſuch ſadneſs upon his Spirits upon occaſion of his good *Mothers* Death, that nothing could comfort him. He went into the *Bath*, hoping for ſome refreſhment thereby, but his ſorrow met him when he came out again. A thouſand *Accidents* may fix ſuch ſorrow even upon young people, which all the *Pleaſures* in the World cannot remove.

And tho the conſideration of their own and others *Sins*, and of the *Effects* of

of them, do make them often *sad*, yet there is both a *secret comfort* at the bottom of it, and a *certain Joy* at the end of it; they know what belongs to the *Laughter of the Soul*, and have frequent tasts of the *joy that is unspeakable*.

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## SECT. II.

§ 2. Strength and Beauty decreased.

A *Second Inconvenience* which attends *Old-age*, is this, *That their Strength and Beauty is decreased* [u]. Those *Arms* and *Hands* which once were able and useful for any imployment, are now scarce strong and steady enough to feed themselves. The *Legs* and *Thighs* that have carried them many a pleasant journey, yea, to many an holy Exercise, are grown stiff and weak, and grudge to carry them up Stairs to Bed. Yea, that *Back* which was the support of the whole building, and many a Load that was piled upon it, begins to bow and bend, and can scarce carry it self erect. Their *Parts* and *Members* in general are quite enervated and spent, as if they were weary of their Imployment; so that there seems to be left

u Ἅπαντ' ἀφανίζει γῆρας ἰσχὺν σώματος. P. min.

left little of a Man but his *Shape*: according to the *Proverb*, *Senex eſt, & non eſt. He is old, and ſo is No-body.* Like ſome ruinated *Palace*, here was the ſtately Porch, there the fair Stair-caſe, the ſhape of a fair Parlour below, and the ſhadow of an handſome Chamber above: ſo here, the *Carkaſs* of the Man remains, but the *Beauty* is changed into *wrinkles*, and the *Strength* into *weakneſs*. They had a pleaſant proſpect in their Glaſs, but their Fleſh hath bid them farewell, their *Roſes* and *Lillies* are withered, and a wan duskiſhneſs hath taken poſſeſſion: their Strength and Beauty are buried both together: So that it was a *Saying* among the *Romans*, *Sexagenarius de ponte dejiciendus. He is ſixty, make away with him.*

For when a mans *Strength* is gone, he ſeems to be *uſeleſs*. He can neither *defend* himſelf, nor *help* others. He can neither *fight* in War, nor *labour* in Peace. Whether he be in the *Temple*, or in the *Campaign*; whether he be in the *Shop* or in the *Field*; he is quickly *weary*. He that could run *to Sin*, can hardly creep *to Church*. He that had *Strength* to vanquiſh his *Adverſary*, hath now ſcarce *ſtrength* to wreſtle with his *Cough*:

and

and the burden of his diſcourſe is, *I have known the time, that I could have done this and that.* Thus *Milo* that prodigious man of ſtrength, when coming in his *Old-age* to ſee them exerciſe in the *Olympick Games*, is ſaid to look down with tears on his own Arms, and to cry, *Alas, theſe now are dead.* Yet this *Loſs* ſome *Aged* perſons can better bear, than *Others* can digeſt the decay of their *Beauty.* O to be lean, withered, and deformed vexeth them at the Heart. They cannot look upon themſelves with *Patience*: and they conclude, that when they be ſo unwelcome to *themſelves*, they muſt be unacceptable to *every body elſe*, Job 14. 20. *Thou changeſt their Countenance, and ſendeſt them away.*

But yet neither of theſe *Inconveniences* are chargeable upon *Old-age* it ſelf. For as *Tully* well obſerves [x], the *defects* of ſtrength, whereof we are ſenſible, do rather proceed from the *Vices of our Youth*, than from the *fault of Old-age.* An intemperate *Youth* tranſmits a weak body unto the time of *Old-age* [y], and then we lay all the blame on *Age.* *Galen* in one place tells us, About the 28*th.* year of my Age, when I knew there was a certain way to preſerve Health, I followed

x *Intemperans Adoleſcentia effætum corpus tradit ſenectuti.* Cicer.

y *Iſta ipſa defectio virium, adoleſcentiæ vitiis efficitur ſæpius, quam ſenectuti.* Id.

followed the ſame all my life after, ſo that I was never Sick but of an Ague for a day, and that ſeldom, and thereby he was vegete and brisk at *Sevenſcore* years of Age. And *M. Valerius Corvinus* was ſtrong enough to be the *ſixth* time *Conſul*, when he was an *hundred* years old. Whereas on the contrary a Luxurious youth, produces a loathſome Age. As the *Thief* in the *Candle* waſts it more than the *Flame*; ſo any *Intemperance* or *Incontinence*, doth waſt the *Strength* and *Beauty* more than *years*.

Neither is *Old-age* alone ſubject to theſe Evils. For one Weeks *Sickneſs*, to which Youth is as lyable as *Old-age* will ruine your *Strength* and ſpoil your *Beauty*, as much as *twenty* years time can do. How many are crippled in their Youth? how commonly doth the Small-pox diſfigure their beauty! *David* himſelf complains, *Pſal.* 102. 23. *He weakened my ſtrength in the way; he ſhortned my dayes.* And he cries, *O my God, take me not away in the midſt of my dayes.* So that theſe *Decayes* muſt not be impropriated to *Old-age*; any Age may be afflicted with them as well as that.

Neither is this *Loſs* ſo inſupportable, if we conſider the true *Nature* and *Value*

*lue* of these *Mercies*. They are but bodily accomplishments; they are not the endowments of the *Soul*. Many *Brutes* surpass the youngest in *Strength*, and many *Flowers* surpass them in *Beauty*. Why should I, saith *Cato in Tully*, now more desire the strength of a Young man, than I should, when young, desire the strength of a *Bull* or *Lyon*? There is the like absurdity in both these desires. Or as *he* saith in *another* place, we may as reasonably in our *Youth*, call back the State of *Childhood*, which few will do, as in *Old-age* to expect the *Strength* and *Beauty* of youth, which is past and gone. You have, if it be not your own fault, the *Priviledges* proper to your Age, and according to the *Old Observation* it is far better to want the *strength of Milo*, than the *Wisdom* of *Pythagoras*[z]. Every Age hath its peculiar *Talent*, to have them in perfection is not to be expected upon Earth. We should be *Thankful* for the *Strength* and *Features* we have had, and bewail our *abuse* of them, and conclude, 'Tis well *that all* our Comforts have not left us together.

[z] *Non sunt senibus vires, nec postulantur vires à senectute.* Cicero.

But the great *support* under these defects is, As *the outward man perisheth, to find the inward man renewed day by day*: what

what the *River* loſeth on the one ſide, it gaineth on the other, and then all's well enough: the *inward* man is the *better* man. Let *ſtrength* and *beauty* go, ſith they will not ſtay, ſtrive that you may be Strong in *Grace*, and Beautiful *within*. Thoſe things may make you acceptable unto *Men*, but theſe will render you lovely both unto *God*, and to all *wiſe men*. When you can ſay with him in the *Poet* [a], tho my *foot* be *ſlower*, yet my *mind* is *ſwifter*. When *Severus* the *Emperour* was ſick of the *Gout* at *York*, he was asked by one of his *Nobles*, how he being ſo *Lame*, could rule ſo vaſt an *Empire*; he told him, that he rul'd the *Empire* with his *Brain*, not with his *Feet*. While the *Head* and *Heart* are ſtrong, it paſſeth leſs, how it fares with the *Arms* and *Legs*. *Faith*, *Hope* and *Charity* are Beauties, that will not fade [b]: and the decays of the Body do by the bleſſing of God, further the true vigour of the Soul. For the *Soul* is a *diſtinct Subſtance*, and as the Houſe may be battered by a Tempeſt, and yet the Inhabitant merry in't all the while: ſo an holy Soul may proſper very well, tho the Body be lame and crazy. And this *Decreaſe* of *Strength* and *Beauty* are very uſeful, to awaken

[a] Euripides.

[b] *Quid times ne te abjiciat in tempore ſenectutis cum defecerit virtus tua? Immo tunc in te erit virtus ejus, quando defecerit virtus tua.* Aug. in Pſal. 70.

awaken the Soul from that *Lethargy*, which is natural to it; they deprive us only of that which is the fewel of our Luſts, and of our ſecurity. Our *ſtrength* hath not *weaned* us from the World, *God* will try what *feebleneſs* will do. Briſkneſs and Beauty hath been a *ſnare*, theſe being removed, perhaps He may now ſpeak with you, and be heard. When you *have ſeen an end of all perfection*, then hee'l ſhew you that *his Commandments are exceeding broad*, Pſal. 119. 96.

## SECT. III.

A *Third Inconvenience* upon *Old people*, is, *That they are weakned in their Faculties.* Their *Apprehenſions* dull, their *Phantaſy* barren, their *Memories* broken, and their *Affections* dry. Formerly they could have *penetrated* into things, they could have learn'd any thing; now they are ſo clouded, that they fumble at the plaineſt things. They could have ſoar'd by their *Fancy*, and coin'd variety of notions; which they found to be a great help to their devotion and other-

§ 3 Faculties weakned.

wiſe, but their *Invention* now is grown poor, and their *Notions* flat. But the moſt ſenſible loſs is of their *Memory*, whereby formerly they could have produced things both new and old; but now their Memory is ſo wofully ſhattered, that this day forgets what yeſterday ſaid and did. O the excellent things that they have *heard* and *read*: and now they are *like water ſpilt on the Ground*, no notices left that ever ſuch things had been within. Time was, their *Love* and *Zeal* for God, and their *Hatred* to Sin was *ſtrong as Death*, and ardent as the *Coals of Fire, which hath a moſt vehement flame*: *many waters could not quench it*. Their holy *Joys* and *Sorrows* were tranſcendent; penitential Tears were frequent with them: But now their *Hearts* are cold, and their *Eyes* are dry. Theſe *Wheels* of the Soul are gone, and thereby their motion is ſadly interrupted.

Now this manifeſt ſtroke upon their *Faculties*, is a very ſenſible *Inconvenience*. The Decay of the *Outward man* might be ſomeway tolerable, but this *inward Decay* ſinks their Spirits. When holy *David* ſaid, *Pſal. 6. 2. My bones are vexed*, his diſtreſs was great, but when he adds

adds in the *next verſe*, *my Soul alſo is ſore vexed*, his caſe was more lamentable. What comfort can a man have, when his *Apprehenſion* is grown blunt? What's a Knife good for, when the mettle is gone? When a man can *attain* little, and *retain* nothing? The deficiency of theſe is a great impediment in all *humane* affairs, but of greater conſequence in *Religious* matters. The Communion which the Soul hath with *God* is in the *Word and Prayer*. How diſconſolate muſt the Heart be, when one can *remember* almoſt nothing of what he reads or hears? When his *affections* flagg, and his words freeze in *Prayer*? Why, he thinks he has lived long enough, he feels himſelf more than *half dead* already. The *Houſe* is left ſtanding, but all the rich *Furniture* is gone, and what can be ſaid to mitigate this miſery, or to reconcile any body to *Old-age*?

To ſtop any further *Impatience*, Conſider, 1. That this great *Decay* in the *Faculties* doth not befall *every Aged* perſon. Divers there are and have been, that retain the free uſe of their *Faculties* till they dye. How many doth *Tully* name, as *Simonides*, *Steſichorus*, *Iſocrates*, *Heſiod*, *Homer*, *Pythagoras*, *Demo-*

*Democritus*, *Socrates*, *Plato*, &c. who lived long, and yet continued a courſe of *Studies* as long as their life? [c] And *he* tells us there particularly of *Sophocles*, whoſe *Sons* accuſed him for a *Dotard* in his *Old-age*, till he before the *Judges* repeated the *Tragedy* of *Oedipus*, which he had newly written, and ſo was by them acquitted. And *Seneca* tells of *himſelf* then in years, that he was able to repeat *Two thouſand Names* in Order, ſo faithfully did his *Memory* ſtick to him in his *Old-age*. And there are many *Inſtances* every day of freſh and lively parts in withered Bodies. Yea, for the moſt part we may obſerve that according to the *Old ſaying*, *Omnia quæ curant Senes meminerunt*. What old people moſt regard, they beſt remember. They ſeldom as *Tully* obſerves, forget their Bonds, their Mortgages, what they owe, or what is owing unto them, or where they have laid up their Treaſure. So that this charge lies not againſt all *Old people*, nor in all caſes.

[c] *In omnibus iis ſtudiorum agitatio vitæ æqualis fuit.* Cicer.

2. Theſe Decays proceed not from *Old-age only*, but many times from *Sloth* and *Negligence*. Their *Faculties* would continue more intire to them, if they did exerciſe them with *Study* and *Induſtry*. But

but the beſt mettal will ruſt with diſuſe, and the meaneſt by conſtant uſe will be kept bright and in good order.

3. The blaſting of Parts is not peculiar to *Old-age*. For many *Diſeaſes* and other *Accidents* do often Eclypſe our *Faculties* as well as *Old-age*. Witneſs *Meſſala Corvinus*, who was ſo weakned in his Head, that he forgot his *own Name*. Yea, many a mans *bad Morals* have ſpoiled his good *Intellectuals*, before he hath made one ſtep into *Old-age*. And therefore this miſery is not to be confin'd to *Old-age*, which neither attends *all old* people, nor *only* ſuch, nor meerly upon the account of their Age.

4. There is this *Comfort*, that tho all theſe *Decays* be the *fruit* of *Sin*, yet in themſelves they are rather *Afflictions*, than *Faults*, and ſo are more ordinable to our good. How much better is the *Decay* of our *faculties*, than the *perverſe uſe* of them? Nay, how many things may we afford to *forget*, rather than chuſe to *remember*? Again, as there may be quick Apprehenſion, clear fancy, and firm memory without one grain of Grace; ſo there may be *ſtrong Graces*, where there are but *lame Faculties*.

You may have a *warm Heart*, tho you have but a *weak Head*. The Favour of *God* is not determin'd by our natural parts, but is diſpoſed according to his everlaſting *Covenant*; according to which he will require no more than he gives. He will welcome him that improveth his *Two* talents to *Four*, with the ſame words as he was received, that made *Ten* of his *Five*.

And finally, It is a Mercy that the uſe of your Faculties is not *wholly loſt*; that you are able, in ſome meaſure, to expound the *Book of Eccleſiaſtes* concerning the *Vanity* of all things below, though you cannot ſo clearly unfold the *Book of Canticles*; that you are able to underſtand and chuſe the beſt things; that you can *preſs* others, to the things that you cannot now perform your ſelves. An *Old man* can direct, though he cannot work. When *David* was almoſt ſpent, yet if you read 2 *Sam.* 22. and 23 *Chapters*, you will find his *Laſt* words were not in vain. In ſhort, in unavoidable Shipwracks, as theſe are, we muſt not vainly murmur at what we have loſt, but thankfully and diligently improve what we have left; for it is certain, that in this caſe *habenti dabitur*;

*dabitur*; to him that *hath* and improveth what he hath, it *ſhall be given*, and *he ſhall have abundance.*

## SECT. IV.

A *Fourth Inconvenience* incident to *Old-age*, is the *Decay of their Senſes*; and eſpecially in thoſe which are called *Senſes of Diſcipline*, *Seeing* and *Hearing*, by which as through windows Light is derived into the Soul. For as in *Natural* things nothing is found in the *Underſtanding*, which was not before in the *ſenſes*; ſo in *Spiritual* things, the *Myſteries* of *Religion* are not *invented* by our *Minds*, but conveyed to us by the *ſacred Oracles*. And therefore it is very probable that *Satan* beareth a particular ſpite to theſe, as *ſome* have obſerved from the *Perſons* poſſeſt by him, whom he ſo frequently ſtruck *deaf*, and *dumb*, and *blind*. But it is evident, that as by theſe *Doors* ſin entred into the Soul, ſo we find our *Decayes* ſooner in them, than in our *other Senſes*. The *Eye* it grows dim, and the *Ear* it grows dull, and both grow worſe

§. 4. Senſes decayed.

and worſe, and that without hopes of Cure. This was the caſe of the *Patriarch Iſaac*, Gen. 27. 1. *And it came to paſs*, that *when Iſaac was old and his Eyes were dim, ſo that he could not ſee*, &c. whereupon uſing his Hands for Eyes, he was miſtaken in his own Sons. Indeed the *Degrees* of theſe Decayes are *different*, in ſome leſs, in ſome greater: but as in *Houſes* the *Windows* ſuffer firſt and moſt; ſo in our *houſes of Clay*, the Organs of *ſight* and *hearing*, do more or leſs, wax out of tune, before the *Fabrick* fall.

Now the *Decayes* of the *Eye* and *Ear* are grievous *Afflictions*; when one can ſcarce diſcern one thing, or perſon, or one letter from another; to continue in a perpetual night or twilight, how uncomfortable muſt it be? Or, to ſee people ſpeak, and yet ſcarce to hear what they ſay, it is next to being buried alive. For man is a *ſociable* creature; and the *All-wiſe God* ſaw that it was *not good for Adam* himſelf, *to be alone*: but the *Privation* of theſe ſenſes leaves a man to *himſelf alone*. He *ſitteth alone and keepeth ſilence, becauſe he hath born it upon him*. He is liable to be abuſed and injured both in word and deed, and is unca-

uncapable to help himſelf. He is alſo rendred uſeleſs; hereupon *T. Manlius Torquatus* excuſed himſelf from the *Conſulſhip*, ſaying it was not fit he ſhould be intruſted with the Lives and Fortunes of others, that could not ſee or hear, but with others eyes and ears: yea, which is worſt of all, ſuch perſons are precluded from the *Means of Grace* and *Salvation*. There is no better company ſometimes than a good *Book*, but they cannot ſee a *letter*. And then *Faith* comes by Hearing, and it is preſerved, and increaſed by the ſame means; but let them preſs never ſo near, they can ſcarce hear a diſtinct word, much leſs a whole ſentence: and what a dry and dead Soul muſt that be, that lives out of the road of theſe ordinary helps?

It is ſome *Queſtion* whether of theſe loſſes is the *greater*, of the *Eye-ſight* or of the *Hearing*. And upon ſome accounts the *latter* ſeems to be the ſadder loſs of the *two*; partly becauſe *God* hath ordained *Hearing*, to be the ordinary Means of *Grace* and *Comfort*: partly becauſe there are no ſuch, at leaſt no ſuch ready and commodious *Helps* yet found out, for the *Dulneſs* of the *Ear*, as there are for the *Dimneſs* of the *Eye*. However, the

the Decayes of either of them, especially of Both these *senses*, are a great *Disadvantage*, and a heavy burden upon *Old-age*.

Notwithstanding all this allegation, *Old-age* is not altogether so miserable as it is painted. For there are many *Aged* People, of whom it may be said, as it was of *Moses*, *Deut.* 34. 7. *his Eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated*: So it pleaseth the *Lord* to continue to many *Aged* persons[d], very great vivacity in both those Senses, the greater cause they have to be thankfull for the same. But though it must not be denyed, that for the most part *Old-age* is *dim of sight* and *dull of hearing*; yet 'tis as true, that even these decayes are incident to *younger* persons. How many young people may we meet with, that are *defective* in one or other of them? Some that are *purblind*, others *dim-sighted*, some from their *birth*, some by casual *accidents*, some by *distempers*: nay, it is one of the wonders of Gods *Providence*, that considering the folly and rashness of *Children*, any of us carry our *Eyes*, untouched unto *elder* years: so that neither is this affliction to be confined to *Old-age*. Yea, if we grant that these *Defects* should

d *Constant Visus & Auditus, nec quicquam in iis imminutum experior.* Guil. Rivet. *ætatis* 70. *Nec dum caligant oculi eo usque ut perspicillis opus sit.* And. Rivet. *ætat.* 78.

una-

unavoydably befall *Old* people, yet they do not alwayes make them *useless*, and then all's well enough. Even *Blind* and *Deaf* persons have bin more serviceable in their places, than multitudes of some people, that have their *eyes* and *ears*. *Tully* tells of divers, that were wholly dark, yet Ornaments to their *Countrey*. In particular, he relates of *Appius*, that was *old* and *blind*, yet retaining his Authority, he governed a great Family with that dexterity, that his Children feared him, his Neighbours respected him; and when a dishonourable Peace was likely to be made with *Pyrrhus*, he caused himself to be carryed in his Chair to the *Senate*, and there did effectually interpose to hinder it.

But that which should chiefly support a wife and good man under these *Decayes* of the *Senses*, is, The comfortable *review* of the *right use* he hath made of them, that he hath not us'd them as *Instruments of unrighteousness unto Sin*, but as the *Instruments of righteousness unto God*; or an hearty *Grief* for his *Abuse* of them: And the joyful *Prospect* of the *Resurrection*, when all our Imperfections will be done away, and *our vile bodies made like Christs glorious body*.

There's

There's no body much grieved at the want of repair in a *Houſe* which he is *leaving*, when he is ready to go to one that will need *reparation* no more. Yea, there is cauſe of *Thankfulneſs*, that we have enjoyed the uſe of theſe *Senſes ſo long*, whereas we might have bin born *blind*, and *deaf*, and *dumb*: but eſpecially, that God hath given us a *ſpiritual Eye*, and an *inward Ear*. "Let that Soul ex- "ceedingly rejoyce, ſaid *Baſil*, that hath "an Eye to diſcern inviſible things, even "to behold him with whom it ſhall dwell "for ever. And thus *Antony* the *Hermite* comforted *Didymus*. "You ſhould "not, ſaith he, take it *heavily*, that you "want ſuch *Eyes* as *Mice* and other "brute *Animals* enjoy, but rather reckon "your ſelf a *bleſſed* man, in having ſuch "*eyes* as *Angels* have, whereby you may "*behold God himſelf*[e].

e *Sozom.* lib. 3. c. 14. *Hieron.* ep. ad Abigam.

And through the *Goodneſs of God* it often falls out, that theſe outward *Defects* are more than compenſated with greater meaſures of *Underſtanding* and of *Memory*. He may well be contented to loſe an *Eye* or *Ear*, which muſt periſh at laſt, that in lieu thereof receives a greater portion of *Faith*, *Love*, *Wiſdom* and *Patience*, and ſo becomes the better

better man, and the better Chriſtian.

It is alſo ſome *alleviation* of this *Affliction*, to conſider that all theſe *Viſible* things are but *Vanity*, yea *vanity of vanities*. That the *Eye is not ſatisfied with ſeeing*, nor *the Ear filled with hearing*, *Eccleſ.* 1. 2. 8. And that whoſo wants his *Sight* or *Hearing*, eſcapes many a *Temptation*, which do frequently ſurprize the Soul through thoſe Windows: and that, as at other times, ſo eſpecially in the *Service of God*. How often doth the *Heart walk after the Eyes*, and ſo ſteal away from *God?* How apt is every *noiſe*, to diſorder the Soul? ſo that as we are deprived of the *comfort* of theſe Senſes, ſo we are freed from the *ſnares* that attend them. And the *Anſwer* is not to be forgotten which *Maris* the *Godly Biſhop of Chalcedon* gave to *Julian the Apoſtate*, who upbraided him, that his *God* had not cured him of his *Blindneſs*; which was, That he praiſed his *God* with all his heart for his Blindneſs, whereby he was kept from ſeeing ſuch an ungracious face, as his was.

And *laſtly*, let us that feel theſe *Decayes*, greatly magnify the *Lord*, who hath directed us to the uſe of *Glaſſes* and *Spectacles*, whereby we have in a manner

manner new *Eyes* put into our Heads, and are inabled to read, and write, and work, even to the very *Sun-set* of our Lives. This is so great a Mercy, that we should do well to take thankfull notice of it, every time we *use* them, to the Praise of God, who is the *Father of Lights*, and from whose *holy Spirit* comes the knowledge of *witty Inventions*.

## SECT. V.

§. 5. Distemper and Pain.

THE *Fifth Inconvenience* incident to *Old-age* is, *That it is burdened with Distemper and Pain.* Thus *Asa*, 2 *King.* 15. 23. in *the time of his Old-age was diseased in his feet.* Then *Aches* and *Diseases* take possession of every part. *Megrims* and *Dizzinesse* seize on the *Head*; *Catarrhs*; *Ptisick* and *Astma's* on the *Lungs*; *Palsyes* on the *Nerves*; *Weaknesse* and *Pain* on the *Back* and *Loins*; *Gravell* and *Stone* on the *Reins* and *Bladder*: The *Gout* on the *Joynts*; The *Hypochondriack Melancholy* on the *Spleen*; The *Colick* on the *Gutts*; and lastly, a *Dropsy* or an *Hectick*, which carry the man

man away. So that an *Aged* perſon is a very *Hoſpital*, and *Old-age* is it ſelf an incurable *Diſeaſe*, and any other added to it makes the caſe deſperate. Some of them indeed ſpeed better than others, but uſually if they eſcape *Acute* diſeaſes, ſome *Chronical* diſtemper attends them to their Graves.

*Senectus incurabilis morbus.*

Now this is a very *ſenſible Inconvenience:* None of theſe afflictions *are joyous, but grievous* with a witneſs. They vex and torment the *Body*, that a man hath no *mind* to *live*, and yet no *power* to *dye*. Hear *Job*, c. 7. 20. *I am a burden to my ſelf.* Job 10. 1. *My ſoul is weary of my life.* The Old perſon cries out with him, *Job* 16. 12. *I was at eaſe, but he hath broken me aſunder, he hath taken me by my neck and ſhaken me to pieces; —he cleaveth my reins aſunder, and doth not ſpare, he poureth out my gall upon the ground. He breaketh me with breach upon breach,* &c. Theſe Diſtempers and Pain *imbitter* all *worldly comforts*; Houſe, goods, Money, Friends, Relations, they are all dead to a man that is *ſick* and in *pain*. They deprive a man of *himſelf*, he hath Ears and Eyes, but no comfortable uſe of them: thoſe things that uſed to *refreſh* him, now *offend* him; his *Meat*, his

*Chair*, his Bed tires him; his *Friends*, their abſence *offends* him, and he is *diſturb'd* with their preſence; poor wretch! he is not well, and nothing is well about him, as to the giddy all things turn round. Theſe alſo *waſte* his *Eſtate*, what will not one ſpend for eaſe and health? one *Remedy* is commended and uſed, and then another; one *Phyſician* employed, and then another; *skin for skin*, all ſhall go for Life and Health. Yea, theſe have a ſad influence upon the *Soul*. When it is lodg'd in a ruinous body, it is ſtifled within it ſelf for want of motion, and move it cannot, or but lamely for want of Organs[f]. It is like a *traveller* with a *tired Horſe*; he ſpurs and ſtrains, but his Horſe is foundred; ſo here, the Soul would pray, and meditate, and flie upward, but the dead weight of a crazy Body hinders; ſo that both *his fleſh upon him hath pain*, and *his Soul within him doth mourn*, Job 14. 22.

[f] Dr. *Harris* his Sermon on *Hezekiah's* recovery.

But yet this *Burden* is not to be appropriated to *Old-age*, as if they and they only were the ſubject of diſtempers and of pain. For, if we obſerve it, we ſhall find *Diſeaſes* more *common* yea and more *dangerous* among *Young* people, than among *Old*[g]. In the *Sacred Story* you will meet

[g] *Facilius in morbos incidunt adoleſcentes, graviùs ægrotant, triſtiùs curantur.* Cicer.

meet with more young People brought to our *Saviour* for Cure, than *Old*. There was *Jairus daughter*, there was the *Nobleman's ſon*, there was the *Syrophenitians daughter*, and then the *Centurions ſervant*, with many others. In contagious *Diſeaſes* it's evident that they are *ſooner* infected, and every *Regiſter* will inform us, that a far greater number of *Infants* and *Young* People are yearly carried to their long home, than of *Aged* Perſons. And then for *Caſualties*, there are far more of young and middle-aged perſons, that are *ſlain* and taken *captives*, than of the *Old*.

Neither are *all Aged* people ſo laden with theſe *pains and diſtempers*; many of them having a very convenient meaſure of health to their lives end. Thus *Tully* brings in *Cato* at *eighty four* years of age declaring, that notwithſtanding theſe years, he was well enough to appear in the *Senate*, to defend his *Client*, and to entertain his *Friends*: And *Maſiniſſa*, King of *Mauritania*, that at *fourſcore* and *ten* years old, he would not be perſwaded to ride in his journeys, or to be covered on his head in the hardeſt froſt, or ſharpeſt ſtorm. And one of the *old* men mentioned in

the *firſt* chapter, made nothing of walking *twenty* miles to dine with a *Relation*, when he was above an *hundred* years old. Neither are theſe *Diſeaſes* always the *fruits* of *Old-age*, but rather of an *heedleſs* and *intemperate* youth. This layes up ſuch crudities, ſurfeits and noxious humours, which lurk in us till *Old-age*, and then ſeize upon us; and then we find fault with the *Choler* in our *Stomack*, but forget the *ſweet meats* which have cauſed it. So that this *Inconvenience* doth neither befall *all Old* People, nor *only* them, nor only upon the *account* of their *Old-age*.

The beſt *Supports* however for the *Aged* under their *Maladies*, are a *deep Study* on the *Wiſdom*, *Power*, *Goodneſs*, and *Promiſes* of God. His *Wiſdom*, whereby he knows what condition is beſt for us. His *Power*, whereby he hath all Diſeaſes at his Command, as the *Centurion* had his ſervants. His *Goodneſs*, whereby he pities us more than the tendereſt Parent doth his weak Child; who alſo *knoweth our frame, and remembers that we are but duſt*, Pſal. 103. 13, 14. His *Promiſes*, that he will not *afflict* without *need*, Lam. 3. 33. that he *will correct* in *meaſure*, Jer. 30. 11. that he

he will not *leave us*, Pſal. 23. 4. that all ſhall *work* for the beſt, *Rom.* 8. 28. that he will *ceaſe*, when his good *Ends* are accompliſhed, *Lam.* 3. 22.

And then we ſhould revolve the great *Benefit* and uſe of them. For by our *Diſtempers* the *Lord* is pleaſed to ſhew us more effectually the *frailty* of our Condition, the *Evil of ſin*, the *Vanity* of the *World*, and many other *Leſſons* that are not commonly learn'd otherwiſe. It's plain, that theſe are fair *warnings* to us to provide a *better houſe* for the *Soul*, that will endure. In this *Diſeaſe*, ſaid *Old Olevian*, I have learned to know aright what *ſin* is, and what the *Majeſty* of *God* is. Nay, ſaid that *Learned Rivet* near his death, I have learned more *Divinity* in theſe *Ten dayes* of my *Sickneſs*, than in *Fifty years* before; it hath ſent me home into my ſelf. And now who would not be *Content* with ſuch uſeful *Diſcipline*? To conclude, try it who will, there is no Condition of Life without ſome *Inconvenience*. *Marriage* is deſired, they are S. *Baſil*'s words [h], but how many *troubles* in it? *Children* are long'd for, but how many *griefs* with them? rich People are counted happy, but how many thorns

[h] *Hom.* 11. *in Hex.*

are found there? Theſe are the *tributes* of Life, which if a man know how to bear patiently, his *Soul* will be bettered, and his *Vertues* adorned. Our buſineſs is to prepare for them beforehand, to lay up a ſtock of *Prayers*, of *Patience*, of *Promiſes*, of *Faith*, of *Evidences*; and when they come, to *poſſeſs our Souls in patience*, to reſign up our ſelves to the holy will of *God*, and if we cannot turn off this our *Burden*, to carry it with all the eaſe and ſatisfaction we can; and to keep a ſound mind, if we cannot have a ſound body.

## SECT. VI.

§. 6. Broken with Croſſes.

A *Sixth Inconvenience* in *Old-age*, is, *that it is broken with Croſſes and outward Troubles.* Theſe, though they meet us in *every* ſtage of our life, yet a whole *troop* of them commonly fall upon us in *Old-age*. Then doth *Poverty* often come as *an armed man*: His *getting* dayes are gone, now his *ſpending* time is come: And if he have need of *much*, and yet hath *little* in ſtore, he ſeems to be in a miſerable Condition.

The

The *Cynick Philoſopher*, when he was asked, what was the moſt calamitous Creature in the world, confidently anſwered, *It was an indigent Old perſon.* Likewiſe every body is ready to injure and run down the *Aged*, reckoning that they are leaſt able to defend themſelves. For as to the weakeſt part of the body, there is a confluence of all *humours*, which ſettle there, ſo very often it falls out, that a combination of troubles ſeize upon *Aged* people, *Joh.* 21. 18. *Verily, verily, I ſay unto thee, when thou waſt young thou girdedſt thy ſelf, and walkedſt whither thou wouldſt: but when thou ſhalt be old, thou ſhalt ſtretch forth thy hands, and another ſhall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldſt not.*

And of theſe Troubles, the *ſharpeſt* are from their *Relations*; the *Diſobedience* of ſome, or the *Death* of others. How doth the pride, prodigality or wilfulneſs of *Children* or *Grand-children* provoke, and grieve the hoary head! And how many *Aged* perſons ſee husband, wife, children, and other dear Friends, and Relations poſted to the grave before them, which do each of them, as it were, tear away a piece of him, and leave him as *a ſparrow alone upon the*

*houſe-top?* In ſhort, *Old-age* is recorded as the *Sink* of mans life, into which run all the miſeries incident to humane nature.

And that which makes this *Burden* more grievous, is, That theſe ſeize upon the perſons when their *ſtrength* is *ſpent*, their *ſpirits low*, and their bodily *infirmities many*. They are within ſight of the ſhore, and yet in danger to be ſunk and wrack'd, with the ſtorms which beat upon them. When they had thought all their troubles had been blown over, it frets them ſore to meet them again. And eſpecially, if they have had *plenty* and *proſperity* in the courſe of their lives, their *ſtraits*, *loſſes* and *troubles*, now aggravate their affliction.

Now to Mitigate theſe Preſſures we muſt know, 1. That theſe *Croſſes* are *common* to all. As they do not infallibly attend *all Aged* perſons, for many have fair weather all their journey long; ſo they befall *all mankind* indifferently in every part of life. If theſe be *Miſeries*, there's no mortal man without his Miſery. We are in this World, as *Iſrael* was in the *Wilderneſs*, who had no *day* without a *Cloud*, but then they had no *night* without a *glympſe of light*. Where dwells

dwells the man, or of what Cloth is his coat made, who hath not met with *ſtraits*, and with *vexations*? that hath not buried many of his *Relations* and *Friends*? ſo that we muſt quarrel with every age, as well as *Old-age*, yea with the *Providence of God* by this argument.

2. Theſe *Croſſes* and *Loſſes* are abſolutely *Hurtful to none*. They are not properly and intirely *Evils*. *Criminal* evils are *real* Evils, *pœnal* Evils are not ſo. Theſe *fluunt a ſummo bono*, are inflicted by *Him* that is eminently *Good*; *ducunt ad ſummum bonum*, they guide and help us towards the greateſt *Good*; *erant in ſummo Bono*, they were upon *him* who was intirely *Good*. *Proſperity* hath, but *Adverſity* hath never hurt a good man. Yea ſome of the *Heathens*[i] have been bold to judge thoſe men *miſerable*, that have never met with *any* troubles. They are our *Phyſick*, which may *diſturb* us; but *Sin* is our *Poyſon*, which will *deſtroy* us. The *bittereſt Phyſick* is better than the *ſweeteſt Poyſon*.

[i] *Nihil infelicius mihi eo videtur, cui nihil unquam evenit adverſi.* Seneca.

3. They are *Uſeful* to thoſe that are *good*. Though they be briars, thorns and thiſtles in themſelves, yet by the

blessing of *God*, they prove *sweet-bryars* and *holy-thistles* to holy men. How many things do we count Evil, that are most wholsom for us? They Exercise our *Faith*, our *Wisdom*, our *Patience*, and the tryal of these is more precious than *of fine gold*. They teach us, as was said of *Diseases*, many lessons more effectually, than the *Word* it self without them can do. The *Chyrurgeon* and the *Executioner* do both *bind* men, but to different Ends; the one doth it to *bereave* of life, the other to *preserve* it[k]. When the good man is *bound in fetters, and holden in cords of affliction, Then the Lord sheweth them their work, and their transgressions that they have exceeded. He openeth also their ears to discipline*, Job 36. 8, 9.

[k] Chamier.

4. These *Crosses* and *Afflictions* are most fit for *Old men*. They are or should be most *strong* to bear them; they have had a *long Summer*, to lay up for a *sharp Winter*: If they have not stored up a great deal of *Faith* and *Patience*, they have *slept in harvest*: They also have been trained, and inur'd to them before this time of day, by long *experience*. They have received much good at the *hands of the Lord*, and therefore may

may the better receive *evil.* As *Cato* in *Tully* anſwers *Cæcilius*, who objected this againſt *Old-age*, that living long a man ſees many diſpleaſing and *uncomfortable* events; Yea, ſaid he, and perhaps many *comfortable* things alſo[l]. But the true and only *Remedy* againſt this *Inconvenience*, is *Faith* and *Patience*; which the wiſe *God* hath largely preſcribed in the *11th. and 12th. Chapters of the Hebrews.* By theſe a ſound *Chriſtian* ſhall not only *bear* theſe Onſets, but *overcome* them, and adorn the hoary head with *trophies.* We cannot, ſaith a *Foreigner* to *Chriſtianity*, change the courſe of things, but we can take a good heart, a maſculine ſpirit, to bear *ſad accidents* with *ſubſtantial courage*, and to be reconciled to *Providence*[m]. And preſently again, It is our beſt way to abide what we cannot amend, and to attend *God* without murmuring, from whom all ailments come; for it is an ill Soldier that follows his *Commander* grumbling[n]. But we have a more ſure *word of prophecy*, Rom. 8. 28. *All things*, mark it, *all things work together for good to them that love God, that are called according to his purpoſe:* Which bleſſed *word*, if it be underſtood, believed and conſider-

l *Quod diu vivendo multa quæ non vult videt: R. Et multa fortaſſe, quæ vult.* Cicer.

m *Quo fortiter fortuita patiamur & naturæ conſentiamus.* Senec.

n *Optimum eſt pati, quod emendare non poſſis; & Deum, quo auctore cuncta proveniunt ſine murmuratione comitari: malus miles eſt, qui Imperatorem gemens ſequitur.* Sen.

conſidered; and our love to God and effectual calling evinced, is alone able, *Gods ſpirit* accompanying it, to ſettle, quiet, and comfort our hearts under all troubles whatſoever.

Let it therefore be the chief care of all *Aged* Perſons to *make their calling and election ſure*, to ſtrengthen their Faith in *God*, and by their hope to travel into the other World; for then only will our *afflictions* feel *light*, *while we look not at things ſeen, but at things unſeen.* The thoughts of the grave will mortifie us to *things ſeen*, and the thoughts of the Countrey beyond the grave will realize the *unſeen World*, and then our troubles will be eaſie, and our croſſes bleſſings. The ſight of the approaching ſhore, will make an *Aged* Perſon bear the preſent ſtorms with chearfulneſs, knowing that he ſhall ſhortly be well, either *under Heaven*, or *in Heaven*: *None of theſe things move me, neither count I my life dear unto my ſelf, ſo that I may finiſh my courſe with joy*, Act. 20. 24.

SECT.

## SECT. VII.

THE *Seventh Inconvenience* that is charged on *Old-age* is, *That it is attended with Contempt.* Old People commonly are *deſpis'd*, eſpecially when they are not ſupported with *good Eſtates.* Moſt People avoid them, and treat them as *ſuperfluous Creatures.* For the generality of men do value others not for their *Wiſdom*, or *real Vertue*, but either for ſome *likeneſs* of diſpoſition, or ſome *uſefulneſs.* Now the *Ancient* are not, by the *diſparity* of their years, ſo *complaiſant*, nor by their *diſability* ſo *helpful* as heretofore; and thereupon they are *contemned* by younger people: Eſpecially alſo when they are grown *decrepit*, and confin'd to their chairs or chambers; then are they an eye-ſore to their *ſucceſſors*, who ſecretly wiſh them well in Heaven, or any where out of their way upon Earth. It is too evident, how unpleaſing their groans, their coughing, and their other weakneſſes are. They that can brook the *peeviſhneſs*, and the *uncleanlineſs* of their *Chil-*

§. 7. Attended with Contempt.

*Children*, cannot bear with it in their *Parents*: All their former *parts* and *pains* are forgotten, and they are beheld, as laſt years *Almanacks*, wholly out of date.

Now this is a ſore *Affliction*, and touches a man or woman to the quick. For ſuch as have been regarded and reverenced, to be neglected and deſpiſed, grates even the moſt ingenuous ſpirits. *Job* 29. 30. *Unto me men gave ear, and waited, and kept ſilence at my counſel: but now they that are younger than I, have me in deriſion; they abhor me, they flee from me*, &c. *Miſerrimum eſt fuiſſe felicem.* The *reſpects* and *honour* that one hath *formerly* had, makes his *preſent contempt* more intolerable. Not but that a good man is *ſatisfied with himſelf*; but he is aware, that hereby he is rendred *unuſeful* to others: For when the *Perſon* is deſpiſed, his *Example* nor his *Counſel*, let them be never ſo profitable, will be regardable or uſeful: He paſſes for an old *Dotard*, and there's an end. The truth is, every man would be *beloved*, and in ſome ſort *eſteemed*, but when on the contrary, he perceives that he is *nothing ſet by*, what ſhould he do in this world? That man is a burden to *him-*

*himself*, who discerns that he is a burden to *every body else*.

But yet as we have observed in *other Cases*, This *Inconvenience* is not *peculiar* to *Old-age*, as if they *only* were despised, or set at nought: For they that will contemn them, will set light by any other sober and wise Person also, yea they will contemn *God himself*. Plain is the connexion, *Levit.* 19. 32. *Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I am the Lord.* They that will despise an *Ancient* Person upon that score, will despise the *Ancient of dayes* himself; so that they are not alone under this *Inconvenience*. Neither is this *Contempt universal*; some young persons have that *Wisdom*, which teacheth them to value, and respect their *Elders*. Thus *Tully* again brings in *Cato* answering *Cæcilius*, who had said, that there was nothing more miserable in *Old-age*, than to find themselves *odious* to others; nay, sayes *Cato*, I believe such *Old* men as we, are very acceptable to such young men as you, *Scipio* and *Lelius*: And so goes on, shewing that look as *Old men* take pleasure in vertuous young men, though far inferiour to them, in age and wisdom;

dom; ſo all *Judicious* young men take delight, and yield great reſpect to grave and *Ancient* men: And thus *Plato* brings in *Socrates* ſaying, I love to hear the Diſcourſes of *Old* men, ſeeing they have already traced the way that I muſt go. And moſt commonly thoſe *Ancient* People meet with moſt *Contempt*, who by their *Frowardneſs* or otherwiſe do leſſen themſelves, and alienate the reſpects of others from them; or ſuch as have *lived* meerly to *themſelves*, without regard to the good of others: Or elſe perhaps to *repay* into their own boſoms that *neglect* and *contempt*, which they heretofore have been guilty of, either to their *Parents*, or other *Seniors*.

But however it be, this *Inconvenience* is not the fault of *Old-age*, but rather of ſuch *undutiful Relations*, who have forgotten the *Law of Nature*; or of ſuch *inconſiderate* people, as never foreſee that the caſe will e're long be their own; and they muſt look for the ſame meaſure, which they have meted to others, to be repaid into their boſoms. The *Infirmities* of *Old* People ſhould rather breed *Pity*, than *Contempt*: Inaſmuch as though, by reaſon of their *Age*, they are become *twice Children*, yet even *their*

*Angels*

*Angels behold the face of their heavenly Father.* And though, by reaſon of their *impotence* or *poverty*, they cannot vindicate their juſt *Authority*, or *puniſh* their Contemners; yet *God* will certainly take their parts, and revenge their wrongs.

In the mean time they muſt *comfort* themſelves in the *Favour* and *Protection* of the *moſt High*, in the *Promiſes* which he hath made, in the *Judgment* and *eſteem* which he hath of them, in the *Integrity* of their *hearts*, in the former *Uſefulneſs* of their *Lives* °, and in the *Hopes* they have to be ſhortly out of the reach either of *envy* or *contempt*. What matter is it for the eſteem of a company of *worms*, when a man is well accounted of among the *Angels*? how eaſily may he want the *reſpects* of *Men*, that enjoys the *ſmiles* of *God*? Alas we are but *ſtrangers* in this world, and therefore muſt not grudge to be *ſtrangely uſed*; he greatly forgets himſelf, and the countrey to which he is travelling, that is much concern'd either with the *Admiration*, or *Contempt* of fooliſh men.

° *Beatus juvenis qui benè vivit, ſed magis beatus eſt ſenex qui benè vixit: quod enim juvenis ſperat, adeptus eſt ſenex.* Ambr. *de Jacob. & vit. beat. c.* 8.

Yet it ſhould be the Care of all *Ancient* people, to uſe all good *Means* to *prevent*, as much as may be, this *Inconvenience*; to wit, to watch againſt all

all *Peevishness*, *Covetousness*, *Envy*, and all the other aforesaid *Vices* of *Old-age*: For there is nothing doth so much *vilifie*, yea *nullifie* a person as *sin*. And then to study and practise *Wisdom*, *Patience* and *Charity*, and those other *Graces* before specified: For there is nothing doth so much command *Regard* as the *Image of God*. Sincere Piety will procure respect, more than birth or riches; and you have seldom seen *Old* People despised but for some real or supposed failings. *Particular instances* do never invalidate, but establish *general* Rules; and that is, *Them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed*, 1 Sam. 2. 30.

## SECT. VIII.

§. 8. Disabled from Service.

THe *Eighth Infelicity* of *Old-age* is, *That it is Disabled from Service*, and rendered incapable of doing good in their Generation. Which though it be an *Effect* of some of the former, yet is a distinct *Affliction*. When the *Faculties* are impaired, the *Strength* exhausted, *Pains* and *Diseases* inflicted, alas!

alas! what *Service* can ſuch a one do for the *Church!* how little for the *Common-wealth!* how little for their own *Family?* Hence the *Levites*, *Numb.* 8. at *Fifty* were diſcharged from the ſubſtance of their work. Hence the *Soldier* at *Sixty* was *Miles emeritus.* For how ſhould the *Head*, *Heart* or *Hand* be ſerviceable, that are ſhatter'd with breach upon breach? His uſeful dayes are done: He muſt now be *labouring for Life*, who before *liv'd for Labour.* They ſee things out of order in the places where they live, but they cannot amend them. He that formerly could have *Studied many hours*, is ſpent now with a *few minutes*; and thoſe that have ſerved at the *altar*, are now glad to ſit by the *fire.* Hence the old *Roman Proverb* beforementioned, *Sexagenarios de ponte dejiciendos*, that is, Let thoſe that are *ſixty* years old be turn'd off the *bridge*: Their work is done, they live to no purpoſe.

Now this is a heavy *Trouble* to a *Good* man, yea to any *Ingenuous* man. Such do know, that *Uſefulneſs* is the *End*, and *Happineſs* of Life: Take that away, and what is Life good for? A man is thenceforth but a *Cypher*, yea

and worse; for he eats, and drinks, and troubles the world, and no way helps the Inhabitants of it. Hereupon in a *certain Countrey*, its said, that the *Old* people, when they found themselves *decrepit*, went into an adjacent *Climate*, where by the quality of the *Air* they were soon extinguished: Which Remedy is not to be liked, though their sense of *unserviceableness* is to be remarked. For *Plato* [p] could say, The more *beneficial* we can be to *mankind*, the *liker* we are to *God*. To become therefore disabled from Service, is *Death* to an active useful spirit. Besides, as *Imployment* makes *improvement*, so on the other side *Rest* breeds *Rust*, and they that leave off the *Acts*, lose the *Habits*, and become more empty and insignificant, than ever they were before. Upon all which accounts this *Disability* is a most disconsolate *Affliction*, and sufficient of it self to sink their weak spirits with despair.

p Τοὺς πλείστους εὐποιεῖν ἐστὶ τῷ Θεῷ ὁμοιοῦσθαι. Plato.

But as we have observed in *other* Cases, this *Grievance* is not *peculiar* to *Old-age*. But people of all Ages have divers ways become unable to serve their generation. Some by the *hand of God*, inflicting such *Distempers* on their *Minds* or *Bodies*, as have made them useless in their

their places. Some by the *Procurement* of *Men*, by whom many in the prime of their time have been laid aſide; ſometimes *juſtly*, ſometimes *unjuſtly*, and all opportunity taken from them of doing good in the World. Neither are all *Aged* perſons rendred uſeleſs: For many there be of both *Sexes*, that perſevere in well-doing to the laſt. *Cato* pleaded cauſes, when he was paſt *fourſcore* years, and *Iſocrates* wrote excellent things at *fourſcore* and *fourteen* years of age. And not only the *Tongues*, but the *Hands* of very many *Old* people are found as nimble to *good works*, as of younger Perſons. They that have been uſeful in their *ſtrength*, will ſcarce ever become uſeleſs in their *weakneſs*. *Plutarch* obſerves that an induſtrious *Bee*, never degenerates into a *Drone*, in its *Old-age*. Too many there be of every Age that live only to themſelves, that neither *Serve God*, nor *obſerve Man*, but in order to their own *Intereſt*, or *Appetite*: Theſe are good for nothing, young or old; but they that underſtand, and embrace the true *Ends* of *life*, will be uſeful one way or other, to their lives end.

And the great *Service* that the *Ancient*

do perform, is by their ſage *Advice*. When the *Levites* were at fifty releas'd from the labour of the Sanctuary, they are ſaid yet to be *Judges* in their Cities. So that although they cannot do *that* ſervice, which younger perſons may, yet they do greater: For the greateſt things are compaſſed, not by *ſtrength*, but *counſel*. They cannot be counted uſeleſs, ſays *Tully*, that preſcribe to the more raw and ignorant their work. Like as a *Pilot*, who thô he run not up and down the Ship, but ſits at the helm, yet is the moſt uſeful perſon in the ſhip: So the *Aged head* is the moſt uſeful part in a family or Commonwealth, though it be confined to the *fire ſide* q. Hence *Homer* brings in *Agamemnon*, wiſhing rather for *ten Neſtor*'s, an *Aged* wiſe man among the *Greeks*, than ſo many *Ajax*'s, who was a man of *Arms*, for the winning of *Troy*. And it is well known, that the grand *Magiſtrates* both in *Greece* and *Rome* were the *Ancients* of their Cities; and thereupon they were called *Senators*, and the great Council of *Rome*, The *Senate*, being compoſed of *Aged* men.

q *Nullæ res ſeniles ſunt, quæ vel infirmis corporibus, animo tamen adminiſtrentur?* Cicer.

Yea if they ſhould by reaſon of their

*Age*

*Age* be wholly unſerviceable, yet their *Example* is uſeful. To ſee a man or woman deprived of all outward comfort and reſpect, and laden with heavy Diſtempers, yet *patient* and *thankful*, *ſerious* and *devout*, it is a powerful *Lecture* to all the *ſpectators*; and may teach them to *be doing* their own great work with all their might, to be *thankful* to *God* for their preſent ſtrength and eaſe, to beware of *ſlothfulneſs* and *ſelfiſhneſs*: That when they arrive at that decrepit eſtate, they may have the *pleaſant proſpect* of a *fruitful life* behind them, and the *joyful proſpect* of a *bleſſed life* before them.

## SECT. IX.

THe *Ninth Diſadvantage* of *Old-age* is, *That it is unfit for Religious Exerciſes.* When we are in years, we are indiſpoſed to *Prayer* and *Faſting*, to *Hearing* or *Reading*, and in general to all ſuch Spiritual Imployments, wherein the *Soul* and *Body* muſt concurr. They *need* theſe Helps as much as *Others*, and perhaps *deſire* them as much as *Others*; but

§. 9. Unfit for Religious Exerciſes.

but the dead weight of a *crazy body* ſinks down the towring of their *precious Souls*. To *will is preſent with them*, but how to *perform* the ſame, they *find not*; and no wonder, having not only a *law of ſin* within them, but a *body of death* without them. Their *ſenſes* are grown weak, their *faculties* weak, their *ſpirits* weak: How then ſhould they *wreſtle* with God in Prayer, or continue *inſtant* therein? Let the *Rider* be never ſo good a *Horſman*, yet he muſt travel as his *Horſe* will give him leave: So let the *Soul* be never ſo *active*, it can operate only as the *organs* of the body will permit it. Inſtead of taking pains about their *Souls*, they are forc'd to prop up their decrepit *bodies*. Their weakneſſes keep them in *bed*, while the holy zeal of others is burning in *Devotion*. And as the *Old* woman in *Plautus* being askt why ſhe went no faſter, anſwer'd, becauſe ſhe carried ſo great a load, to wit of *eighty four years* on her back; ſo the load on *Old* peoples back either hinders them from coming to holy *Aſſemblies*, or elſe cauſes them to travel thither very ſlowly; ſo that they are conſtrained to live, in a manner, *without God in the world*.

Now

Now this *Affliction* to an holy heart is a very heavy *burden*. When a poor man is cut ſhort in all his other Comforts, and as it were beſieged with all the Calamities of this life; yet while he hath this *River* of *Gods Ordinances* free and open, thereby he receives continual ſupplies from *Heaven*, the *ſtreams thereof make glad the City of God*: But when this is *ſtopt*, the Soul grows ſad, and dry, and barren. Hence holy *David* in his *Exile*, never mentioning his temporal loſſes, yet cries out, *Pſal.* 42. 4. *When I remember theſe things, I pour out my ſoul in me: for I had gone with the multitude to the houſe of God.* This went neareſt to his heart. For when a man is harras'd with cares and troubles all the week long, yet he is relieved and refreſhed in his approach unto *God* upon his *own Day*: But with the decrepit *Old man*, every day is alike, and his Soul is left deſtitute of ſpiritual ſupplies in an ordinary way. And this *Affliction* is ſaddeſt of all, when by *diſuſe* of the means of Grace, the *Soul* grows *ſtupid* and unconcern'd in the matter; as without ſpecial *Grace*, we ſhall be apt to be: So that the miſery is *great* in the *want*, and *greater* when *inſenſible*

of the *want*. No great wonder therefore that when all these miseries meet together, a man cry out with *Job*, *I would not live always*. So that *Tiberius Cæsar* had a saying, as *Plutarch* tells us, that it was a shameful thing for a man that was past *sixty*, to stretch out his hand to a *Physician*; reckoning that it was fit he should then be content to dye.

But yet, if we weigh the matter well, the Case of *Ancient* people is not so *desperate* as it seems. For to proceed in our *former Method*, it is evident that many others besides the *Aged* are cut short in the *means of Grace*; some *willingly* in *Factories* beyond the Seas, some *willfully* by their own *Atheism* and *Ungodliness*, some *unwillingly* by *Distempers* and other *hindrances*. And on the other side, divers *Ancient* people have been capable to attend the Service of God even to their dying day. Thus *Ahijah*, though his *Eyes were set for Age*, yet was enabled to prophecy to *Jeroboam*'s wife. And *Jacob* could *worship God*, *leaning on the top of his Staff*. And St. *John* was an *Evangelist*, when he was an *hundred* years old. And there was *Anna*, a widdow of about *fourscore and four*

*four years*, yet *departed not from the Temple, but ſerved God with faſtings and prayers night and day*, Luk. 2. 37. So that *all Aged* perſons are not precluded from ſpiritual exerciſes.

And though they ſhould become unable to frequent the *Publick Ordinances of God*, yet they may pray, and ſigh, and meditate in their *chambers*; and theſe, proceeding from a ſincere and ſenſible Soul, are moſt acceptable unto *God*. As for the *external Acts* of Religion, they avail nothing without *faith* and *love*, which lodge in the heart. The *immanent Acts* of the Soul, which are to underſtand, to meditate, to will, and to deſire, do moſt perfect the ſame. And where the *Deed* cannot be done, *God* doth accept the *will* for the *Deed*. The weakeſt and pooreſt *Old man* or *woman* may have *high* meditations under a *low* roof, and a *large* heart within *narrow* walls.

No *Aged* perſon therefore ſhould be diſcouraged by their *Inability* for *Gods Service*; ſince *He knoweth their frame*, he *remembreth that they are but duſt*. The *Lord* hath ſaid, *When the poor and needy ſeek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirſt: I the Lord will hear*

*hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open Rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys, I will make the Wilderness a pool of water, and the dry Land springs of water*, Isa. 41. 17, 18. In the want of *ordinary supplies*, I will provide them with *extraordinary supports*: the *wilderness* shall produce a *pool of water* rather than any Child of God shall dy for *thirst*. When they cannot *wait upon God* as before, he will *wait* to be *gracious* to them, he will come to them, and teach, and comfort them. If indeed a man be inwardly pleased, that his *weakness* excuseth him from his *Devotions*, he hath cause to blame himself; but if he hath the same desires and holy affections with others, the old *Law* shall stand; to wit, *he that stayes by the Stuffe, shall part the Spoil, with him that goes out to battel*. You have a *trade* going in every *Ship*, an *Interest* in every holy *Assembly* in the World.

## SECT. X.

§. 10. Terrified with the approach of Death.

THE *Tenth* and *last Inconvenience* in *Old-age*, is, *That they are Terrified with the approach of Death*. For *Death* is a word hard of digestion to any man. The

The *Philoſopher* counted it of all dreadfull things the *moſt Terrible*. And Mr. *Latimer* obſerves of *Hezekiah*, that he was more afraid of *Death*, than of all *Senacheribs Army*. Now *Old-age* is a near neighbour to it, and the aſpect of it alwayes before them, is not very pleaſant. Moſt men, ſaith *Seneca*, are miſerably toſt between the *fear of Death* and the *miſeries of Life*, are unwilling either to live or dy [r]. Eſpecially they who have had their portion in this life, and have made no proviſion for a better. This made *Lewis* 11th of *France* to charge all about him, to *forbear the mention of Death*. The ſtrict *Account* which follows it, and the long *Eternity* which follows that, makes Death a moſt ſerious matter. No wonder if the hand tremble, when it is going to take that Cup, which will *mend* or *end* them. Now the *Old* man is at the door of this fatal place. Though a *Caſualty* may bring Death *ſuddenly*, though a *ſickneſs* may bring it *probably*, yet *Old-age* brings it *certainly* [ſ]. Peradventure there are *fifty* weeks or dayes remaining in their life, peradventure but *forry five*; perhaps but *forty*, but *thirty*, yea but *twenty*, as *Abraham* ſaid of *Sodom*; nay, ſince it is dubious every moment, and no

[r] *Plerique inter mortis metum & vitæ tormenta miſeri fluctuant: & uivere nolunt, & mori neſciunt.* Sen. *Ep.* 4.

[ſ] *Caſus nunciat mortem latentem; infirmitas apparentem; ſenectus præſentem. Ex incertitudine, timor; ex infirmitate dolor; ex certitudine afflictio.* Palæot. *ex* Hug. *de clauſtr. anim.*

no mortal man knows at what Watch of the Night he ſhall be called, the *Aged* perſon that is but a *ſtep from death*, muſt be *through fear of Death in continual bondage.*

But the *Lyon* is not ſo terrible as he is painted, neither is *Death* ſo formidable as it is by many repreſented. Though it be againſt the *Deſires* of *Nature*, yet it is not againſt the *Series* of *Nature*[t]. For if we conſult this, we find *Autumn* kindly after *Summer*, and *Winter* after *Autumn*; and *Death* is as natural after *Old-age*. And the *Light of Nature* taught ſome of the *Heathens* to reckon the worthy men, eſpecially that are dead, to be moſt truly alive, in that while we live in this world, the *Soul* is *impriſon'd* in the *body*, and is ſet at liberty by *Death*. Thus *Xenophon* brings in *Cyrus* diſcourſing to his *Children* on his Death-bed. "Think not, O my Sons, that I leave "you quite, and am loſt when I dye; "perhaps you will not ſee me, neither "do you now ſee the moſt *Eſſential* part "of me, nor never did: only by my "*actions* you believed it was in this bo-"dy, and that will live out of this body "as well as in it[u]. And if *Pagans* ſet ſo light by *Death*, what notion ſhould we

t Every thing is good that is agreeable to Nature; what more natural, than for an old man to dy?

u The Godly in Death is alive. *Hebr. Prov.*

we *Chriſtians* have of it, that can look more clearly beyond it? It is ſtyl'd a *falling aſleep*, and what's more welcome to an *Aged* perſon than a *ſound ſleep?* And from that *Expreſſion*, 1 *Theſſ.* 4. an *Old Toletan. Council* ordained that the dead ſhould be followed with *Pſalms* of Praiſe to their Graves.

In ſhort, 1. *All Aged* People are not oppreſſed with the fear of Death. Too few there are that think at all of it. Men generally *put far from them the evil day*; and it will be an evil day to ſuch as put it far from them. Moſt people can think of any *place* in the *Pariſh* rather than the *Church-yard*; yea, I doubt it be one of the *Faults* of the *Aged* to think ſeldom of Death, and they who think little of it, are in no danger of being frighted with its thoughts.

2. The Young have the *ſame reaſon* to be concern'd about *Dying* as the *Old*. For *Youth* hath more wayes to Death than *Age* hath. And far more dye in their *Youth*, than that dye for *Age*. It's true, they hope to live longer, but their hopes have no good *ground* at all. They have neither *Promiſe* nor *Experience* to build their hopes upon. And in Young Peoples *Death*, they being in their ſtrength,

*Nature*

*Nature* receives a more *violent ſhock*, whereas the *Aged* are more quietly extinguiſhed, like a *Candle* in the *Socket*.

3. No *good man* need be affrighted at the *approach of Death*. For the *power* and *ſting* of Death is utterly taken away by our *Saviours Death*, and ſo it can do us no hurt[w]. A Child of God doth not ſo much as *taſt* Death. The true Believer now hath not to do with *Death*, but with its *ſhadow*, with a toothleſs Dog, with a dead Lyon, with a Waſp without a Sting, with a conquer'd Enemy. What man in his wits is afraid after a *tempeſtuous Voyage*, that he is drawing nigh his *Haven*. It was a ſweet ſaying of S. *Ambroſe*, near his end: "I "have not ſo lived, that I am aſhamed "to live among you, neither do I fear to "dy, going to ſo good a Maſter. The unprepared and the ungodly may dread *Death*. As *Ariſtippus* told the wicked *Mariners* trembling in a *Storm*; "You "may well be *afraid*, going to receive "your juſt *puniſhment*, but hoping for "my *reward* in the other Life, I am not "amazed with this at all. But now when a man hath ſet his Houſe and Heart in order, and finiſht his work, he may ſing his *Nunc dimittis* with comfort, and

[w] *Vita Chriſti inſtruxit noſtram; mors Chriſti deſtruxit noſtram.* Bern.

and say as that *holy Woman* [x], "*I am one* "that neither *wisheth Death*, nor *feareth his* "*night*, but as *merry* as one that's bound "for Heaven.

4. There is much *Folly* in this slavish fear of *Death*. A holy *Care* to prepare for it, is far better than an unprofitable *Fear*. For the passion of *Fear* is planted in us for the *avoiding* of things hurtful, but there is no avoiding of *this fate* [y]. *There is no man that hath power over the Spirit, to retain the Spirit, and there is no discharge in that War*, Eccles. 8. 8. That disquiet is therefore *foolish*, that *torments* but *profits* not. How can the mind be quiet at *any* time, which is afraid of what is impendent at *all* times [z]. It is observed by *Seneca*, that neither *Children* nor *Idiots* are afraid of *Death*; and he infers, that it is a base thing, that *Reason* (I add the *Scripture*) should not work as much security in us, as *Folly* doth in them. Shall *learned Old* men fear that, which *foolish Young* men do not? O wretched *Old* man, said *Tully*, that in so *long life* hast not learn'd to despise *Death*! I end this with the Observation of *Judicious* Mr. *Calvin*: He that cannot quiet his Heart in the holy contempt of *Death*, hath profited but

[x] Mrs. *Ann Aiscough*.

[y] *Mortem timere dementis est: quia certa expectantur, dubia metuuntur.* Senec. *Ep.* 30.

[z] *Nulli potest secura vita contingere, qui de producenda nimis cogitat.* Id.

but little in the *Faith of Christ*.

Let it therefore be the business of each *Aged* person to be *reconciled* to *Death*; to be *dying daily*, by *Mortifying* your affections to all the vanities of this life, and by *meditating* on the life to come. Never fret at that Death which leads you to *immortality*. Rather *rejoyce*, that you are taking leave of a *World of Sin*, and taking flight into a *Land of uprightness*; O Father (said an *Officer* to a *noble Ancient Persian Minister*, that trembled at the approach of *Death*) shut your Eyes but a little, and you shall see *God* in Glory. And thus I conclude this *Particular*, that too many *Old* people never fear *Death*, for they never spend thoughts about it; that the *young* have as much *reason* to apprehend it, as the *Old*; that a *slavish fear* of it is *folly* in any; and that no good man needs to be *affrighted*, but rather *comforted* with it.

So that upon a just *Survey* of all the *Inconveniences* of *Old-age*, all *Aged* persons may answer, as *Tully* tells of one *Gorgias*, who being 107 *years* old, was asked why he was contented to live so long? Why, said he, I have nothing whereof to accuse *Old-age*; and the truth

truth is, it seems perverse and unreasonable, that all people should *desire* to *attain* unto it, and then when they have *attain'd* it, to *dislike* it [a]. *Difficulties* and *Disadvantages* there are with it. Whereof no *Age* or condition is free, but they are *Tolerable* and *Ordinable* to the *good* of all that fear *God*. And so much may suffice for this *fifth Point* to be handled.

[a] Τῆρας ἐπὰν μὲν ἀπῇ, πᾶς εὔχεται. ἢν δὲ ποτ' ἔλθῃ Μέμφεται. Menecrates.

*Valeant stolidi illi qui, dum abest senectus, eam optant; dum adest, accusant.* Cicer.

# CHAP. VI.

## *The* Priviledges *of* Old-age.

### SECT. I.

I Proceed now in the *Sixth* place, to discourse the *Priviledges*, and *Comforts* of *Old-age*. That there is some peculiar *Blessing* and *Dignity* in *Old-age*, is evident, both by the *Light of Scripture*, and the *Light of Nature*. The *First Commandment* with *promise* is, *Honour thy Father and thy Mother, that thy days may be long in the Land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee*: The like *Promise*

*Cap. 6.* The Priviledges of Old-age.

you will find, *Pſal.* 91. laſt. *With long life will I ſatisfie him, and ſhew him my Salvation.* Which ſhews that *Old-age*, whatever *Inconveniences* it is attended withall, is in its ſelf a ſpecial *Bleſſing*. And on the *Contrary*, it is *threatned* as an heavy Judgment unto *Eli*, that *God* would *cut off his Arm, and the Arm of his Fathers Houſe*; that is, he would take away his might, and the ſtrength of his Family, in that there ſhould not *be an Old man in his Houſe*, 1 Sam. 2. 31. And in general, *that bloody and deceitful men ſhall not live out half their days*, Pſal. 55. laſt. Whereupon holy *David* prays, *Pſal.* 102. 24. *O my God, take me not away in the midſt of my days.* Finally, the *Holy Ghoſt* aſſures us, that the *Beauty of old men, is the Gray Head*, Pſal. 20. 29. By all which it plainly appears, that *Old-age* is a deſirable Mercy, in the judgment of *God* himſelf.

Agreeable hereunto is the *Ancient Hebrew Proverb* in *Ben Syra*, to this effect, *Senex in domo, bonum ſignum in domo.* And if that be a real good thing which *all men deſire*, then certainly there is ſome peculiar *Goodneſs* in *Old-age*, for that *all men deſire* to attain it. So alſo we mingle among our *good wiſhes* to others,

others, this of a *long life*. When *Kings* and *Grandees* are saluted, this is the common *Acclamation*, that they may *live long* [b], and if it were possible, *live for ever*. And *Antiquity* is so valuable a thing, that not only *Families* and *Cities*, but *Nations* have had long and sharp disputes about the *Antiquity* of their respective people, as the *Egyptians*, *Phœnicians*, *Scythians*. And the *Athenians* had this *Character* affixed upon them, that they could *discourse* well, but the *Lacedemonians* could *do* well; because an *aged* person coming upon a time into a great *Assembly* at *Athens*, had no *Respect* given him; but at *Sparta* in the like *Convention*, they all rose up to seat him. So that it grew *Proverbial*, That *Old-age* dwelt most like its self at *Sparta* [c]. So then as there are some *Inconveniences* in *Old-age*, which yet as you have seen, have divers things to *mitigate* them, so it hath many *Priviledges* and *Comforts* which do over-ballance them. *God hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him.* There is only this *difference*, that all our *Troubles* spring from *below*, but all our *Mercies* drop from *above*. The particular *Priviledges* and *Com-*

b *Ad multos Annos.*

c ἐν σπάρτῃ μόνῃ λυσιτελεῖ γηράσκειν. Proverb. *Lacedemone esse honestè senectutis.* Cicero.

*forts* of *Old-age*, are theſe following.

§ 1. It is greater in Authority.

*Firſt*, *Old-age* is *Greater in Authority*, than any other Age. There is an *Authory* reſulting from the *Law of Nature*, as well as that which is conferr'd by *Civil Laws*; the *former* is that wherewith *Old-age* is inveſted. *God* himſelf, who is the *Fountain of Honour*, hath given them a *Patent* for it: ſo that their *Authority* hath ſomething in it *divine*, and they ſeem to have a kind of *Natural Government* over others. Hereby the Sentence or *Opinion* of the *Aged* may well conclude, as much as the *Arguments* of the younger; and he muſt have a great deal of *Wiſdom* or of *Confidence*, that ſhall contradict what a wiſe *Aged* perſon hath aſſerted.

That there is a certain *Authority* in *Old-age* is plain from divers *Scriptures*. As, *Iſa.* 9. 15. *The Ancient, and the Honourable he is the Head.* Now we know that the *Head* is the Seat of *Rule*. When *Moſes* had occaſion for ſome *Coadjutors* with him in Judgment, the *Lord* cauſed *Seventy of the Elders of Iſrael*, to be ſet apart for that work, *Num.* 11. 16. And ſo the *Judges* who conſtituted the *Sanhedrin*, were made up of *Seventy two Elders*. Again, when the *Apoſtle* would moſt

most efficaciously perswade *Philemon*, *ver.* 9. he accosts him with his *Title of Honour*, being such a one as *Paul the Aged.* And the beloved *Disciple* authorizeth his *two latter Epistles* with this *Periphrasis.* The *Elder to the Elect Lady*, and the *Elder to the wel-beloved Gaius* [d]. And as this *Preeminence* proceeds from the *Will* of the *All-wise God*, so it is the *Sence* of *wise Men.* The *Philosopher* [e] affirms, that the *Elder* do *naturally* precede the younger. And *Tully* tells us, that as any one exceeded in years, so he had a kind of *Ruling* voice in debates [f]. Yea, *Pliny* and *Solinus* report it of the *Elephants*, and of the very *Ants*, that when they go by Troops, the *Elder* commonly go before the others.

And there is a very rational *Ground* for this *Authority* in *Old-age.* In that the greater *Seniority* any one hath in years, the nearer, even upon *that* account, do they approach to the likeness of the *Eternal God*, who is called the *Ancient of Days*, Dan. 7. 9. whose *Garment* is represented to be *white as Snow*, and *the Hair of his Head like the pure Wool.* Withal, it is presumed that the *Aged know* more, for that they have *seen* and *heard* more than the younger [g].

d *Qui cum refugeret Apostolum se scrsbere, seniorem scripsit.* Ambros. *in Psal.* 37.

e Arist. *polit. lib.* 7. *cap.* 14.

f *Ut quisq; ætate antecellit, ita sententiæ principatum tenet.* Cicer

g *Senibus Authoritas major est, quod plura nôsse & vidisse creduntur.* Quintil. lib. 12. c 4.

Now *Wiſdom* and *Knowledge* do challenge *Authority*, by a certain *Natural* right, becauſe the determinations proceeding thence, are ever ſuppoſed to be grounded on the *ſoundeſt Maxims*.

Now this *Authority* is a conſiderable *Priviledge*, being as is ſuppoſed in the hand of a *wiſe perſon*, inſomuch as it is called by *Cato* in *Tully*, *Senectutis apex*, the *Crown of Old-age*. For it derives weight unto all their Counſels, Reproofs, or Inſtructions. The *Judges Decrees* are held ponderous by reaſon of his years, as well as from his *Office*. The *Miniſters Advice* becomes venerable by the *Authority* which his *Age* hath cloathed him withal. The *Old Phyſician* can ſway by his *Authority* more than the younger. So that *Authority* is a *Talent*, which being well imployed, doth much further our *Uſefulneſs* in the World: yea, their *Example* is more effectual than others; for one may learn much from ſuch an one, though he ſay never a word [h]. The more *Authority* any man hath, the more *conſpicuous* he is, he is like a *City ſet on a Hill*, and his way and carriage are ſtill inſtructive. The *dignity* of the *perſon* ever adds *luſtre* to the *example*. And therefore all *Aged* perſons had need to

h *Multum eſt quod à ſapiente vel tacente proficias.* Senec.

to be circumspect in their ways, lest instead of leading others in the narrow way to life, they do by their *Example* lead them in the broad way to destruction.

It doth therefore greatly behove all those that are in years, to be *Sober*, *Grave*, *Temperate*, &c. For the *hoary Head is a Crown of glory, if it be found in the way of Righteousness*, Prov. 16. 31. That which is the *Crown of Glory* on the *hoary Head*, is the *Wisdom* and *Piety* that lodgeth in the *heart*. The *Heathen* could say, Gray hairs and wrinkles do not presently create *Authority*, but the *former* life well managed, makes the *latter* part justly respected [i]. So that *Old age*, simply considered, will not always pass for a leading demonstrative *Argument*; as if it were enough to say, *I am an old man*, and therefore you must needs *believe* or *yield* unto me; no, true worth and wisdom must lead the *Van*: but it is a good *Second*, and carries with it a great *presumption*, that *Prudence* and *Piety* dwell there. And hence it is, that in all *Societies* and *Assemblies*, whether *Civil* or *Religious*, that *Dignity* is allowed to *Seniority*, that commonly the *Eldest* presides in the company, and guides the affairs thereof.

i *Non cani, nonrugæ repentè authoritatem afferre possunt, sed honestè acta superior ætas fructus capit authoritatis extremos.* Cicero.

## SECT. II.

§ 2. Richer in Experience.

THE *Second Priviledge* of *Old-age* is, *That it is Richer in Experience*, than any other age. This is manifest on the first view, that *Experience* is the consequent of a *long life* [k]. We have a *confused* knowledge of things by *Hear-say*, or *Instruction*, but by tract of time we arrive at an *experimental* knowledge thereof. *Job* could say, *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the Ear, but now mine Eye seeth thee*, Job 42. 5. By which it appears, that *ocular* demonstration is the most *certain*, wherein *Old-age* hath the greatest advantage [l]. They have lived long enough to find, in matters *Speculative*, what is *true* and what is *false*. We owe the knowledge we have of the *Celestial* Bodies, to the *Study* and *observation* of *Aged men*. We discover what is *Safe*, or *Dangerous* in matters of *Practice*, to the well-tried *Maxims* of men in *years*. What was it, which found out the *nature* and *use* of *herbs* and *druggs*, but long *observation*? It's true, *Experience* is a *dear Mistress*, but yet 'tis a *sure* one,

k *Serus venit usus ab annis.* Ovid. Met.

l ὁ γὰρ χρόνος δίδαγμα ποικιλώτατον. Sophocl.

one, and the Instructions we have that way, stick fastest to us. We far sooner forget the particulars of those *Countries* of which we have *read*, than of those which we have *traversed* our selves. The *Aged* person can tell experimentally of the wisdom and justice of *Gods Providence*, of the *Truth* of his Promises and Threatnings, of the Devices of *Satan*, of the Deceitfulness of *Riches*, of the Wisdom of *Integrity*, of the Vanity of all carnal *Delights*, of the wickedness of his own *Heart*. *Old-age* is rich in the *Experience* of these things, whereby they are able to govern *themselves*, and to advise others.

As for *themselves*, by this *Experience* they are taught to avoid many *Dangers*, which others fall into. For it is made up from long *observation* of particular things, to wit, of *Memory* of things *past*, *Knowledge* of things *present*, and *Providence* of things *future*. And as their long tryal of the effects of *Diet*, and *Exercise*, have made them capable of the *Conservation* of *Health*; so their manifold *Experience* of the *deceitfulness* of the Flesh, of the World, and of the Devil, hath enabled them to countermine and conquer them. And as to *Others*, their *Experience*

m Experience is a tedious but a sure Master.

*ence* renders them able to give the moſt prudent *Counſels*, and to forewarn them of thoſe *Conſequences*, which they eaſily foreſee. *Æſchines* ſaith, that among the *Athenians* by an old *Law* of *Solon*, the *Oldeſt* did firſt make his Speech to the people, and after him each according to his age; for, ſaith he, they thought, that the *Eldeſt* through their *Experience* counſelled beſt for the City [n]. And without doubt in *Publick* affairs, the *Experienced* man out-ſtrips the *learned* man. For as the *Philoſopher* [o] obſerves, *Art* teaches only *General Notions*, but *Experience* acquaints us with *Particular Actions*, by converſing with which we arrive at *Skill* and *Conduct*. *Juſtin* relates it of *Alexander* the *Great*, that he would have his Squadrons led by none under *Sixty* years old. For who will chuſe him for a *Captain* that's well-read in *martial* affairs, and that's all? Who will truſt his life in the Hands of a *Speculative Phyſician*? No, *Experience* goes further in all theſe things than *Learning*.

n πρεσβυτάτους ἐξ ἐμπειρίας τὰ βέλτιστα τῇ πόλει συμβουλεύειν.

o Ariſt. *l.* 1. *Met.*

Juſtin. *lib.* 11.

For the *Aged* and *Experienced* perſon having ſeen ſuch great *miſtakes* in himſelf and others, is cured of that vain *Credulity*, which hath ruin'd young people;

ple; and having met with ſo many *diſappointments* in the World, is well freed from that carnal *Confidence*, which hath undone others. And yet their great *Experience* of the power and faithfulneſs of God, is a mighty Bulwark to their *Faith*. As *they have heard*, ſo *have they ſeen in the City of God*, what he hath done to vindicate his *Attributes*, and to verify his *Promiſes*. Hence holy *David*, Pſal. 37. 25. *I have been young, and now am old: yet have I not ſeen the righteous forſaken, nor his Seed begging Bread.* This was the advantage he had by his *Old-age*, to trace out the *Providence* of God towards the poſterity of good men, that walking in their Parents ſteps, they were ſeldom or never reduced to *want*, at leaſt to common *beggery*; or if ſo, yet were never quite *forſaken* of God, as himſelf found, when though, 1 *Sam.* 21. 3. and 25. 8. he was glad to ask ſupplies of men, yet was he ſtill ſupported and owned of God.

The good *Old* man can ſay, *Thou art my King of old, O God*, Pſal. 74. 12. He can ſay, *I remembred thy judgments of old, O Lord, and have comforted my ſelf*, Pſal. 119. 52. And thus he may direct others. *I will guide thee with my Eye*, Pſal.

Pſal. 32. 8. And thus a man may vindicate and honour *God: Concerning thy Teſtimonies, I have known of old, that thou haſt founded them for ever*, Pſal. 119. 152. The unexperienced *Newneſs* of any *caſe* or *trouble*, is apt to ſtagger the ſtrongeſt faith or courage. Such things aſſault a man by way of *Surprize*, but when we have had an *experience* of them, we are corroborated to grapple with them. No doubt the *firſt Night* was a ſtrange thing, to them that had ſeen nothing but *Light* before, but when when they found by *Experience* the return of the *Light* again, they could brook it well enough. So the *Burden* that did at firſt affright us, by often carrying it, we eaſily bear it, *Pſal. 63. 7. Becauſe thou haſt been my help, therefore in the ſhadow of thy Wings will I rejoyce.* And it is conceived, that this cauſed *David* to ſpeak ſo of *Goliahs Sword*, 1 *Sam.* 21. 9. *There is none like that, give it me.* He might have found another Sword of equal mettle, but he had *Experience* of the goodneſs of that, and ſo there was *none like that.*

From this long *Experience*, the *Aged* perſon not only *contemns* many things which others *admire*; but grows able to

to give a great *gueſs* concerning future events, both in *publick* and *particular* Caſes. So that ſuch perſons may well be reſorted unto as to common *Oracles*, if they have treaſured up wiſdom according to their years.

To conclude this, there lies a *double Duty* upon *Aged* perſons in reference hereunto; the *One* is, to take due *Notice* of all ſuch paſſages of the *Providence* of *God*, or the *Improvidence* of men, that come within the ſphere of their Cognizance, and not heedleſly to *neglect* them; *another* is, to *ſtore* up in their *memories* ſuch *Obſervations*. For experience is made up of divers Memoires of the ſame things P, *Pſal.* 143. 5. *I remember the days of old, I meditate on all thy works, I muſe on the work of thy hands.* And then to *produce* theſe in time and place convenient, either for their own, or others *direction*, *caution* or *conſolation*.

P *Ex multis memoriis ejuſdem rei conflatur experientia.* Palæot.

SECT.

## SECT. III.

§. 3. Freer from Sin.

*Thirdly*, another *Priviledge of Old-age*, is, *That it is freer from Sin.* The *Corruption* of *Nature*, and the *Fruits* thereof, are the great blot, and woful plague upon mankind, and the first thing which every person, arrived at the use of *Reason* should seriously set about, should be to be healed of it. But instead of that, most people meeting with *temptations* without them, and finding *Strength* and *Youth* within them, forget the care of their *Hereditary Disease*, and pursue their iniquities with greediness. Some are tickled with *applause*, and so they hunt after an airy renown, and an ungrounded *reputation*; others let the reins loose to *sensual delights*, and wallow in the *pleasures of Sin for a Season*; *Others* setting aside all fear of *God*, and love to their Neighbour, are set upon *Revenge*, and will run down every one that stands in their way; and *others* hoping for that satisfaction in *Riches*, which they will never find, set their minds to grasp after a plentiful Estate,

by

by hook or crook. Now tho *some young* people do happily escape these snares, as was the case of *Obadiah*; and some *Old* people are unhappily intrapt in them, as was the case of *Solomon*; yet most commonly *Youth*, by reason of it's *inexperience* and *unmortifiedness*, is full of Sin. *Job* could reflect on the *Sins of his Youth*, and *David* saw cause to cry for the pardon of those offences. Hence *Aristotle* would scarce admit them capable of *Moral Lectures*. And indeed that ardour and vehemence which is almost inseparable from that age, makes them an easie prey to many *Temptations*.

Now when *Old-age* takes possession, the proud, the furious, and the wanton spirits are spent. As *Wine* at first is mixt with *dregs*, till by time it *settles* and is *refined*; so the *Passions* of youth, if they be not mortified by the *Grace of God*, yet they are weakned and deaded by the *age of men*. As *Tully* hath it, when Pleasures have almost depraved both body and mind, then *age* comes and cures that, which *Wisdom* could not; and it is an happiness to be rid of such unruly Guests any way.

But *you will say*, though *one sort* of sins are gone, yet others succed in their room:

room: and it is too evident by what hath been ſaid before, that *Old-age* hath it's ſins, as well as Youth. The *Objection* muſt be anſwer'd with *Tears*: No age in this World without it's temptations; this *Leproſy* will not be fully cleanſed, until the *Houſe* be taken down: but yet as we find *Children* and *Youth* more apt to breed *vermine*, than *aged* perſons; ſo there are *fewer* Enormities in this age, than in that q. For *Tranſgreſſions* do generally proceed either from *Ignorance*, which *Old-age* doth uſually inform and heal; or from the ſtrength of *Paſſions*, which are much rebated and repreſt in *Old-age*; or from *Malice*, now the wiſer a man is grown, the leſs likely he is to *chuſe* evil: the more divine Strokes and *Judgments* one hath ſeen upon evil doers, the more he ſhould be afraid of tampering with it: the nearer a man is to his end, the more in all reaſon he will beware of clogging his Conſcience; ſo that *dying luſts* are fitteſt for a *dying Body*, and an *holy Heart* for an *hoary Head*.

q *Id ago ſenex ne videar velle, quæ puer volui.* Sen. *Ep.* 61.

And this is a great *Priviledge*, for as much as *Sin* is the *Diſeaſe* of the Soul, and the greateſt *Evil* in the World: ſo that that State of life, which is *freeſt* from

from it, muſt needs be the *happieſt*. For it is this that helps to compleat our felicity in *Heaven*, that no *Sin* lodgeth there, and the *Aged* perſon is haſtning thither, and conſequently ſtrives to break this Yoke, and fit himſelf for that Eſtate. As the *pleaſures* he hath had in theſe is gone, ſo his *deſires* after them are gone alſo. He now finds that there is more *Satisfaction*, in *not deſiring* them, than there is in *enjoying* of them, and ſo is far from being grieved at his releaſement from thoſe Shackles[r]. He would not live over again his ſinful life for all the world; and he is concern'd, not becauſe they *are paſt*, but becauſe at any time they *had dominion*. Yea, he finds more real content in his *Pœnitential Tears*, than ever he had in his *Youthful Frolicks*: with what *contempt* doth he behold the *Debaucheries*, the *Duels*, and the frothy *Follies* of the roaring Sparks, which they triumph in, as in an Heaven upon Earth? But he hath fathom'd them, and found them *empty* as vanity, and *filthy* as the Mire. He now *believes* what he had often *heard*, that the pleaſures of Sin are but like a *golden dream*, which leave nothing but *Penſiveneſs* behind them, till *God* upon

[r] *Qui ſe libidinum vinculis laxatos non moleſti ferrent.* Cicer.

his repentance, reſtore unto him the *joys of his Salvation.* Now the *Varniſh* of his Sin is worn off, he ſees the filthy and ugly *nature* of it, and wonders that any rational perſon ſhould ever *love* it. He is now *frighted* at the remembrance of thoſe Pranks, that he formerly committed without *remorſe*; and in ſhort, he is well pleaſed, that he hath a *weak body* inſtead of his *ſtrong corruption*; and is ready, with that excellent *Philoſopher* [s], to count his *Old-age*, his *flouriſhing* age, becauſe he only finds his *Vices*, and the *fewel* of them *withered*, and that his mind began now to be freed from the Snares, wherein it was held by the Body, *&c.*

[s] *Non ſentio in animo ætatis injuriam, cùm ſentiam in corpore: tantum vitia & vitiorum miniſteria ſenuerunt; viget animus & gaudet non multum ſibi cum corpore; magnam partem oneris ſui depoſuit; Exultat & mihi facit controverſiam de ſenectute, hanc ait eſſe florem ſuum; credamus illi, bono ſuo utatur.* Sen. *Ep.* 26.

Let every *Aged* perſon labour to find theſe bleſſed *Effects*, and ſo be content with the *fall* of that *Houſe*, which was continually haunted with ſuch *Furies* [t]. But take heed of being only *Paſſive* in this parting; theſe Fires ſhould not only *go out* of themſelves, but ſhould be *quenched* by true *Mortification.* It is not ſufficient, that Sin be *dead in you*, but you muſt be *dead to it*: you muſt be

[t] One may deſire the Death of this Body, to be delivered from the Body of this death, Mr. *Caryll.*

*active*

*Active* in the Crucifixion of it, or elſe the Corruption of *one* vice will be the Generation of *another*. *If ye through the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the Body, ye ſhall live*, Rom. 8. 13.

## SECT. IV.

§. 4. Proner to Piety.

THE *Fourth Priviledge* of *Old-age* is, *That it is Proner to Piety*. True and *ſolid Piety* is the Dominion of Gods Fear and Love, in the Heart of Man, and exerts its ſelf in the conſtant Practice of all the Duties of Religion, in a conſcientious manner. For in *Religion* there is a *Body* and a *Soul*. The *Body* of it conſiſts in the *Form of Godlineſs*; the *Soul* of it, is that which animates all the outward Acts, and is fitly called the *Power of Godlineſs*; for that the *Activity* and force of any thing proceeds from the *Soul*, or inward *Principle*. Now the ſeparating this *form* and *power* of Godlineſs, like as that of the Soul and Body, is the *death* of Godlineſs. And therefore, though we prefer the *Soul*, or *inſide* of *Religion*, yet we divorce it not from the *Body*: but do take *Piety* in

it's juſt Latitude, comprehending the *Acts* of *Devotion*, from a right *principle*, in a right *manner*, and to a right *end*, and expreſſing it ſelf in a *ſober*, *righteous*, and *godly* life. And however the prophane *Atheiſt* may wickedly *deride* it on the one hand, or the rotten *Hypocrite* falſly *pretend* it on the other; yet there is a wonderful excellency in it, and an abſolute neceſſity of it, even the *Conſciences* of it's greateſt *Enemies*, firſt or laſt, being *Judges*.

To this ſerious *Piety*, *Old-age* is more propenſe, than any other age of man. Inſomuch as we find divers in *Scripture*, and other *Stories* bent for Heaven in their *declining years*, who in the former parts of their lives minded nothing, but the World and the Fleſh. They whom no Perſwaſions, no Ordinances, no Afflictions could fully reduce to the *obedience of Chriſt*, yet the lively ſenſe and feeling of their own *decay*, and of their *approach* to the eternal Judgment obligeth them to true repentance, and to *make their calling and election ſure*. So that it hath paſs'd for an *Obſervation*, that they who are not *fair* at *twenty*, *ſtrong* at *thirty*, *wiſe* at *forty*, *rich* at *fifty*, *pious* at *ſixty*; are never like to be *fair*, or *ſtrong*, or

or *wiſe*, or *rich*, or *religious*. When any man is warn'd out of the *Houſe* he lives in, laying aſide all other unneceſſary buſineſs, he ſets himſelf to provide another *Habitation*: Now every decay of ſtrength, of ſenſe; every gray Hair, or Wrinkle is a ſenſible warning out of the *earthly Houſe of his Tabernacle*; and he muſt be ſtrangely ſtupid [u], that buckles not, in good earneſt, to provide for his Soul, when not only it may *ſuddenly*, but muſt *ſhortly* go either to Heaven or Hell. Theſe kind of Sentiments cauſed that learned *Grotius* to profeſs, when he approached Death, that he would gladly exchange all his *Learning* and *Honour*, for the plain integrity of one *Jean Vrick*, who was a devout poor man, that ſpent *eight* hours of his time in *Devotion*, *eight* in *Labour*, and but *eight* in *Sleep*, and all other *Refreſhments*. So alſo that great States-man, S^r *Tho. Smith*, Secretary of State to Q. *Elizabeth*, ſome time before he fell ſick, ſent for Directions to two Biſhops, how he might live moſt piouſly and make his peace with God [w].

Beſides, all the unruly *Paſſions* being now cooled by time and years, *Reaſon* obtains a fair hearing, and the *Spirit of*

[u] *Quid enim ſtoliditus ſieri poſſet, ſi mens ad perfectionem non contendit, quando totus corporis habitus ſenectute confectus ad interitum properat?* Cyprian.

[w] Dr. *Loyd* Fair warning, *p.* 162.

*God* gets a compleat victory over the Heart, that had reſiſted ſo long. Even as a *City* which hath been long beſieg'd, and often ſummoned to ſurrender, yet ſtands it out, till proviſions begin to fail, and that the *defender* of it ſees the Walls terribly ſhaken, and then he finds it high time to capitulate and deliver it: ſo *Almighty God* calls, and cryes, and knocks time after time at the ſinners *Heart*, but it is heedleſs of theſe calls, it's feaſted and filled with the Vanities of this preſent life; but when it finds all the Fabrick ready to fall upon it's Head, and no proviſion made for a future and eternal State; it is high time to be getting *Oyl*, and laying up a *good foundation for the time to come.* And for thoſe who have been *well diſpoſed* before, yet *Old-age* is a great *Incentive* to greater holineſs. As a Man in *ſailing*, ſaith Mr. *Bradford*, the nearer he comes to the Shore, the nearer he would be; ſo the nearer I am to *God*, the nearer ſtill I would be. A perſon of years muſt needs have a more clear and comprehenſive *knowledge*, of the *Doctrine* and *Duties* of *Chriſtianity*, of the life of Faith, of Mortification, of the extent of the Divine Law, of the Nature and Power of Godlineſs;

lineſs; and having more leiſure, and being ſomewhat *retired* out of the throng of worldly buſineſs, they are fitter to *recollect* theſe things, and to *reduce* them into practice.

And this certainly is a great *Privi-ledge*, to have a greater *Aptitude* to that which is *good*. Alas, young people are under a great diſadvantage herein: it's true, their *Faculties* are more nimble, and their *Memories* more freſh; but then they come into the World like *raw Souldiers* into the Field; they are compaſſed and daily allured with divers *Temptations*, and have boiſterous *luſts* within themſelves, and ſo they are in a more remote diſtance from true *Piety*. They are like an unruly *Colt* in a large and fat Paſture, there's no coming near them, till they are driven into a Corner, till their way be *hedged up with Thorns*, and then you may catch them. Such is the fate of young people, they are born *like a wild Aſſes Colt*, Job. 11. 12. they *care* not for any thing that's *good*, they *fear* not any *evil*, adding Iniquity unto Iniquity, until it come to *ſnow* upon their *Heads*, and that their Arms and Legs begin to fail them; and then the Voice of *God* will

be heard, and his counſel ſhall be follow-ed. So that though *Old-age* will not *bring* a man to Heaven, yet it will *fit* a man for it, it removes the Obſtacles of repentance, and promotes the Exerciſes of Religion.

And it is high time it ſhould be ſo; their activity for this world is paſt, if they do not grow active for another, they will be good for *nothing*. They cannot *work*, O but they can *faſt* and *pray*, and that's better. The *Aged* perſon remembers, that he is going into an holy world, and labours to have on Earth ſome *ſuitableneſs* to the life of Heaven; becauſe men begin their Heaven or Hell upon Earth. And this *age* fits his purpoſe, being proper for *Mortification* and *Meditation*. The more knowledge, and holineſs he arrives at here, the riper and fitter he is for that place to which he is ready to goe [x].

[x] *Hæc ætas optimè facit ad ſtudia, jam deſpumavit, jam vitia adoleſcentiæ domita, laſſavit: non multum ſupereſt, ut extinguat: ſi quis quærat, quando proderit, quod in exitu diſcitur, aut in quam rem? In hanc, ut ætat melior.* Senec. *Ep.* 78.

Let every *Aged* perſon then, endeavour to verify this *Priviledge* by their *ſolid Piety* in all the *inſtances* thereof. Let there be a *Principle* of holineſs within,

in, and the *Practice* of it without in all manner of Converſation, for as you were told, then is the *hoary head a crown of glory, when it is found in the way of righteonſneſs*, Prov. 16. 31.

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## SECT. V.

THE *Fifth Priviledge* of *Old-age* is, That it is *Riper in its Fruits*, than any other age. That is, their *Judgments* are more refined, their *Paſſions* more ſedate, their *Devotions* more ſtrong, their *Actions* more regular and uniform, and their ſpiritual Stature taller. This may be gathered, *à fortiori*, from the *Apoſtle*, 1 *Cor.* 13. 11. *When I was a child, I ſpake as a child, I underſtood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childiſh things.* The *words* and the *thoughts* then of an *Aged* experienced man muſt, by a juſt inference, be very *ſolid* and *weighty*. Every man muſt needs obſerve the *rawneſs* of his younger *conceptions*, and the *lightneſs* of his former *aſſertions*: that *Dies diem docet*, every day learns ſomewhat of that which went before it; and ſo

§. 5. Riper in Fruits.

I may allude to that passage, *Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night addeth knowledge.* Yea the *Psalmist* expressly tells us, that the *righteous shall still bring forth fruit in Old-age*, yea that *they shall be fat and flourishing*, Psal. 92. 14. And to this do other *Authors* y, and *Experience* bear witness. Trace some *Aged* good men from morning to night, you shall still find them (humane and unavoidable *infirmities* excepted) so *discreet* in their *Charity*, so *grave* in their *Counsels*, so *savoury* in their *Discourse*, so *constant* in their *Devotion*, so *considerate* in their *Resolutions*, so *faithful* in their *Reproofs*, so *poized* in their *Temper*, so *charitable* in their *Censures*, and so *uniform* and *useful* in their *Lives*, that their *Practice* may be a perpetual *Sermon*, and *Copy* to teach others their duty to *God* and man: So that it was no small *Title of Honour*, which was given to *Mnason*. Act. 21. 16. That *he was an Old Disciple.*

y *Senectus enim ipsa in bonis moribus dulcior, in consiliis utilior, ad constantiam sibeundæ mortis paratior, ad reprimendas libidines firmior.* Ambros. *Hex.* l. 1. c. 8.

And there is a rational account to be given of this; seeing the *Aged* person hath had *Time* and *means* to sift and weigh all vulgar Notions, to observe the frailties both of himself and others, to distinguish realities from appearances,

nd to penetrate through the ſurface nto the ſubſtance of ſpiritual things, nd of temporal. They have paſt through ll *Relations*, and having been *Children* nd *Parents*, *Husbands* or *Wives* for a ong time, and many of them *Servants* nd *Maſters*; they are hereby inabled oth to *ſpeak* and to *act* in all caſes, with the greater *ſolidity* and *efficacy*. Add to this, that their long acquaintance with *God* cannot but *aſſimilate* them unto him, and make their fruits holy, juſt, and good. Let obſervation be made, and it will be commonly found, that the *Diſcourſes*, the *Sermons*, the *Books*[z] that proceed from perſons of *years*, thô they may want the external *ornaments* and *ardour*, which are uſual with younger perſons, yet have that *congruity*, *weight*, and *wiſdom* that raiſe their value, and render them more truly uſeful: So that we may well ſay in this Caſe, that the *beſt wine is reſerved to the laſt*.

Now this is a valuable *Priviledge*. For who doth not rather chuſe the *fruit* that is *ripe*, than that which is *raw*? if it be not to ſome *palates* more *toothſome*, yet it is to all *bodies* more *wholſome*: *Summer* fruit may be more *luſcious*, but *Winter* (*Old-age*) fruit is more

[z] See Dr. *Sheaſe*'s Vindication of Old-age, written by Him at 80. Dedicated to Dr. *Chaderton* who was 100. and publiſhed by Dr. *Gouge* at 65. A. D. 1639.

more ſolid, and will keep longer. The *ſtony* ground were they *that received the Word with joy*, but having *no root*, they ſoon withered: But the good ground were they, that *kept the word*, and brought forth *fruit with patience*. And that which puts a value upon theſe ripe and well-digeſted *fruits*, is that they tend more eminently to the *glory of God*; hereby they ſhew forth the *vertues*, and ſo the *praiſes* of him, that hath called them: And they do more largely conduce to the *good* of all, that have occaſion to uſe them, or are converſant with them. To which purpoſe *Plutarch* obſerveth, that as they who teach *Muſick* do by their own ſinging, direct their Scholars; ſo they that would inſtruct young men in private or publick affairs, muſt not only outwardly *dictate* good axioms and *rules* to them, but by their own ſteady courſe in word and deed, endeavour to frame their minds to vertue. There is an incredible charm in *Example*, and thereby a good man is a *common bleſſing*.

Plutarch. *An. ſeni, &c.* p. 519.

Let all you *Aged* perſons then, conſider what *fruits* ye bring forth. It doth not become you to be *credulous* in what ye hear, nor *raſh* in what ye ſpeak,

ſpeak, nor *precipitate* in what ye do: Whatſoever ſavours of youth is *unſeemly* in you. You muſt ſtudy to live as *patterns*, you ſhould do *more than others*. They that have been long at a *Trade*, ſhould be accurate in it. The *Apoſtle* puts much upon the *Time*, Heb. 5. 12. *When for the time ye ought to be teachers*, &c. you have been long in *Chriſts ſchool*, you ſhould be perfect in the *Rules* of *Chriſtian* life [a]. They who had received *Five* talents, will not be accepted, unleſs they bring *ten* again. If your figs be not good, *very good*, it is probable they will be bad, *very bad*. If an Aged perſon be not *ripe* for *Heaven*, let him take heed he be not *ripe* for *Hell*.

[a] *Ille ergo bene ſenescit, qui bene ſenſerit.* Ambr.

## SECT. VI.

§. 6. Worthier of Reſpect.

THE *Sixth Priviledge* of *Old-age* is, That *it is worthier of Reſpect*, than thoſe of an inferiour Age. I mean hereby, both an *Inward Reverence*, and the *External expreſſion* thereof; and the *former* is and ought to be the foundation of the *latter*. An *Aged* perſon, even on

on *that* account, though neither *ri*
nor *wiſe*, though neither *noble* nor *p*
*ous*, yet deſerves a reſpect for the *Pr*
*ority* of his *Being*. The Veneration du
to them is founded on the *Law* [b] *of N*
*ture*. Hence *Plato* appoints that ever
one ſhould honour the Aged both i
word and deed, and this he often re
peats. And it was much obſerved i
*Three Indians* once in *Paris*, that kep
ſtrictly to the order of their *Age* i
*ſpeaking*, without any Directour but th
*Law of Nature*. All the diſputes abou
the *Antiquity*, and conſequently the *Di*
*nity* of *Families* or *Cities* is ground
on this foundation. Why ſhould *O*
*Monuments*, *Old Coins*, yea even *Ol*
*Ruines* be regarded, and not *Old men*
and *Old women?* This is alſo directly
injoyned in the *Fifth Commandment*,
where by *Father* and *Mother* that are
to be *honour'd*, *Divines* do rightly de-
termine, that ſuch as are *Elders* by *Age*,
as well as thoſe that are ſo by *Relati-*
*on*, and *Office* are intended. And *Ho-*
*nour* in that *Precept* means an *inward*
Eſteem, and Reverence in the heart,
and the ſame expreſſed by a *ſuitable* be-
haviour towards them, in *word* and
*deed*. And this is expreſly ſpecified,

*Levit.*

[b] *Magnæ fuit capitis quondam reverentia cani.* Ovid. 5. *Faſt.*

*Levit.* 19. 32. *Thou ſhalt riſe up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I am the Lord.* The *Jews* indeed had a *Tradition hereupon,* that it was not only fit to *riſe,* when an *Aged* perſon was paſſing by us, but that we ſhould riſe up, when they were *four cubits* diſtance from us; and then we ſhould preſently *ſit down again,* thereby to manifeſt that we roſe up in *honour* to them: But the plain *ſcope* of that *Command* is only, that we ought to make all due *expreſſion* of *Reſpect* to the *Aged.* And the *indefiniteneſs* of the *Precept* ſhews, that it is due to *all* that are *Aged*; even that pale and wrinkled face challengeth a regard; and the *fear of God* is joyned with it: *q. d.* As you *fear God, honour* the *Aged:* and becauſe the young, the rich, and the proud will be loth to ſtoop herein, therefore he adds, *I am the Lord:* Whoſe *Authority* is unqueſtionable, and whoſe *Will* is the higheſt Reaſon, who will *reward* the keepers of this law, and *puniſh* the breakers of it. Agreeable to this is that, *Prov.* 23. 22. *Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and deſpiſe not thy mother, when ſhe is old.* Likewiſe, 1 *Tim.* 5. 1, 2. *Rebuke not an Elder, but intreat him*

*him as a father, and the younger men as brethren, the elder women as mothers.* Where you ſee the *Apoſtle* interpreting the *Fifth Commandment* as aboveſaid; elder men as *fathers*, elder women as *mothers*.

Accordingly it is *threatned* as a ſore *Judgment*, when the *child ſhall behave himſelf proudly againſt the Ancient*, Iſa. 3. 5. and ſo it was reſented, when it was *executed*, Lam. 4. 12. When *the faces of the Elders were not honoured*. And we have a *Comment* upon this in a *heathen Poet* [c], who tells us that they held it for a wickedneſs worthy to be expiated by *Death*, if one that was young did not riſe, to ſhew reſpect to one that was *Old*. Let thoſe conſider this, who make no difficulty to *take place* of their *elders*, meerly becauſe themſelves are ſomewhat *richer*. And upon this very *Principle* the *Eldeſt ſon* is by a natural right concluded to be *heir*, and I queſtion whether he ſhould be defeated of it for any defects or *immoralities*. Upon all which it is apparent, that there is a ſpecial *Reſpect* and *Reverence* due to *Old-age*.

[c] *Credebant hoc grande nefas & morte piandum, Si Juvenis vetulo non aſſurrexerat*— Juv. Sat. 13.

Now let us conſider what *Priviledge* there is herein. If there were nothing in it but a matter of *Preference* or *precedence*

*cedence*, it were no great attainment; though many an *Estate* hath been *spent*, and many a *Life lost* for the compassing of these. But this *Respect* is chiefly valuable for its *Use*. For hereby the *Aged* person is fenced from *Contempt*, unto which he is liable enough through his impotence, poverty, and infirmities; and any ingenuous man had rather *dye* with *comfort*, than *live in contempt*. But principally, they are hereby preserved in a *capacity of doing some good*; their example, their instructions, their reproofs, and their advice will become significant. We generally value mens *Judgments* and *Determinations* according to the *persons* that give them. Great *care* they should have *how* they advise, and a great *deference* should be given to their advice. So the *Apostle*, 1 Pet. 5. 5. *Likewise ye younger submit your selves to the elder*. And hereupon I would exhort and charge all *young* people, that shall cast their eyes on these papers, to remember their place and duty, to deny themselves, their own humours and preconceits, and to strike sail to their Seniors. They were *praying*, perhaps before you had a *being*; they had done *God* and their Countrey good service, before you had

done *one ſtroke* of work. Holy *Paul* laid ſomething upon *ſeniority* in *Grace*, *Rom.* 16. 7. *Andronicus and Junia, who were in Chriſt before me*; and by the like reaſon, it is ſome *Dignity* to be *in the world* before others. Inſomuch as when the *Latines* would expreſs their *eſteem* of any thing, they uſe this word of *Antiquity*[d] to expreſs it by. Away then with that unchriſtian, yea unmanly, and unmannerly pertneſs and diſreſpect too frequent every where, towards *Aged* perſons: Inſtead whereof reckon it to your *good Breeding*, yea charge it upon your *Conſcience*, to give *Honour to whom honour is due.*

d *Nil habui antiquius.*

## SECT. VII.

§. 7. Further from the World.

THE *Seventh Priviledge* of *Old-age* is, That they are *Further from the World* than younger perſons are. Theſe are in the *midſt* of it, and of all its *troubles*, and *temptations*; but thoſe have travelled through them, and are now almoſt paſt them. There are *Two* things in the *World* that make it *uneaſie*, *Sin* and *Suffering*. *Sin* that makes it

it uneaſie to *Good* men, *Suffering* that makes it uneaſie to *All* men. A good man hath contracted a deep hatred againſt *ſin*, and yet he cannot be rid of it. He meets with it in every place; among the looſer ſort of people it ſwarms, he ſees and hears that every day, which *vexeth his righteous ſoul*; and returning home he finds it in his *own heart*, and that grieves him *moſt*. He is chain'd to a *body of death* without any remedy; and the more knowledge and grace he hath, the more he *hates it*, and abhorrs *himſelf* by reaſon of it. It meets him in every *Imployment*, in every *Prayer*, and vexeth him at the heart. He is like a man who lives by a *bad Neighbour*, or that is yoaked to a *froward Wife*, that cannot live *comfortably with* them, and cannot live *poſſibly without* them: Hence he cries out, *O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this Death?* Now the *young* perſon, is in the midſt of theſe *Philiſtines*; the corruption of his Nature meeting, as is ſaid before, with the temptations of the World, is as *tinder* to the *ſparks*, too eaſily ſet on fire with luſt, anger, gluttony, and ſuch like; wherewith he muſt be either in continual and ſharp

*conflict*, or else miserably *ruin'd*. Now the *Aged* person hath gotten many victories in this spiritual *warfare*, whereby his enemies are grown *weaker*, and he bolder and *stronger*. He knows this bickering will not last long, and sees the *reward* of his victory, and so pleaseth himself with his Condition. This made the *Apostle*, when *Aged*, to say, 2 *Tim.* 4. 7, 8. *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, and henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness*: And is not this a Priviledge? would he accept a *new lease* to live over his life again? not for the whole world. *Seneca* could say, if some God would indulge me so far, as that I might return into my cradle again, I would earnestly refuse it: I would never yield, when I have *almost* run my whole *race*, to return quite *back* again [e].

And for the *Sufferings* in the World; man whether he be *born* to an *Estate* or not, yet is *born unto troubles as the sparks flie upward*. We meet them in *every* stage of our *Life*; we come into the world with *Cries*, and go out with *groans*; and a great part of the space between, is repleniſht with *sighs*, and *cares*

[e] *Quod si quis Deus mihi largiatur ut ex hac ætate repuerascam & in cunis vagiam, valdè recusem: nec vero velim, quasi decurso spatio, a calce ad carceres revocari.* Seneca.

*cares*, and *troubles*. Some inflicted by the *hand of God*, and ſome by the *hand of Man*. One while pain or ſickneſs upon the *body*, another while wants or loſſes in our *eſtates*; ſometimes wounded in our *names*, and ſometimes in the *unhappy life*, or *untimely death* of our *Relations*; yea if we eſcape theſe, and have a perpetual *Sun-ſhine*, yet the cares and troubles that attend *Proſperity* are not few nor ſmall. So that when *God* ſurveyed the world *at firſt*, he pronounced all was *good*; but when the *wiſeſt* of men had made his ſurvey of it ſince the *Fall*, he pronounced all things in it to be *vanity*, and *vexation of ſpirit*; and the *Aged* man can conclude it by his own *experience*, to be a *ſea of ſtorms*, a *ſink of ſins*, and a very *priſon to the ſoul*.

Indeed it is a Stage whereon we have opportunity to *honour God*, and do ſome *ſervice* to our fellow-creatures; but otherwiſe the *beſt Notion* of it, is only a convenient *Inn* for Pilgrims in their *Journey*. And upon this account we ought to be *content* while we *are* in it, and and *very well content* to be *releaſed* out of it. For what wiſe man but is glad

to part with the most convenient *Inn*, to be going towards his own *home* [f]? Alas, they who are *Old* have seen so much of the *falseness* of the world, of the *deceits* of men, of the *divisions* of the Church, of the *weakness* of good men, and of the *wickedness* of evil men, that they are *sick of this world*, and could not be hired with all it can give, to abide in it *one day* after their work is done. When a man hath found something *above*, *beyond*, and *after* this world, he is weary of it [g].

So that the *Priviledge* of *Aged* persons who are even past the World, is really *great*. They have escaped those *rocks* and *gulfs*, of which younger persons are yet in danger. They may look back with *pity* on younger persons, who are to grapple with the difficulties, which they have overcome. They have also attained that, which all young men desire, for these *would live long*, and the *Aged have lived long* [h]. They have seen *an end of all perfection*, and that is a poor *perfection* that *hath an end*; and after all they find, that this is *not their rest*, *because it is polluted*. Although they have been *crucifying* the world a long time, yet

[f] *Nec me vixisse pœnitet; quoniam ita vixi, ut frustra me natum non existimem; & ex vitâ istâ discedo, tanquam ex hospitio, non tanquam ex domo; commorandi enim Natura diversorium nobis, non habitandi, dedit.* Senec.

[g] *Nihil de seculo desiderare potest, qui seculo major est.* Tertul.

[h] *At senex est eò melior conditione quam adolescens, cùm id quod sperat ille, hic jam assecutus est. Ille vult diu vivere, hic diu vixit.* Cicero.

yet they cannot make it *wholsome* enough to *feed* on, without much *caution* and *jealousie*. And finding it so dangerous a *Master*, and so troublesome a *Servant*, they are glad to be rid of it, and glad that they are *near parting*: So that he who hath *tried* the world, and yet *loves* it, is *bewitcht* by it. As a man that hath *surfeited* on any thing, his Stomach *riseth* against it: so is it with the *Aged*, they have too long surfeited on it, and now their Hearts rise against it [i]. The World and they are *easily* parted, for it cares *little* for them, and they care *less* for it. Farewell (think they) thou false and flattering World, that *promised* me *content*, and never *performed* it; that *pretended* to be my good Friend, and hast proved my *constant Snare*, my *deadly Enemy*; I am now going to a peaceable holy and endless World. Hence it was that when the *Physicians* once told holy Mr. *Dod*, in a dangerous Sickness in his *Old-age*, that they had good hopes of his *Recovery*; he *answered* them, that the news pleased him no better, than if one should tell the weather-beaten *Mariner* that was putting into the *haven*, that he must *turn back* to conflict with the Storms again.

[i] *Solenne in confinio mortis positis, res humanas ex ignotâ quadam & supernaturali causa fastidire.* P. Suav: *Histor. Conc.* Trident.

No certainly, they who are almoſt got ſafely through this dangerous World, would be loth to venture into it again.

Indeed if a man have no *portion but in this Life*, if he have no houſe but *Hell* to go to, when he leaves the world, it is no wonder if he be *loth* to part with it: but they who are *dead* to this world, and *ripe* for a better, would not *live here alway*, but *rejoyce exceedingly, and are glad, when they can find the grave*, Job 3. 22. And this leads me to

## SECT. VIII.

§. 8. Nearer to Death and Eternity.

THE *Eighth Priviledge* of *Old-Age*, which is, that it is *Nearer to Death* than in the Courſe of Nature, younger perſons are, and conſequently if they be in Chriſt, *nearer to the Everlaſting Life*. For though it is *poſſible* for the Young to dye *ſoon*, yet it is *impoſſible* for the *Aged* to live *long* †. Their manifeſt *Decayes* are a certain preſage of their approaching *Diſſolution*, and no *Medicine*,

†Of young men dy many, Of old men ſcape not any.

*dicine* hath yet bin found to cure *Old-age*. The *graves are ready* for them, and the *Worms* wait for their laſt *repaſt* upon them. The *moth* of *Mortality*, which is bred in our Nature, will ſtill be *fretting* the Garment of our Bodies, till they be conſumed. *Death* is already got into the *Aged* perſons *Eye*, and *Ear*, and in a ſhort time will bring him unto the *duſt*. Now though this be an *unwelcome* Meſſenger to thoſe that live at eaſe, yet to an holy *Old* man and woman it is a bleſſed *Priviledge*: for as looking *backward* they ſee a tempting troubleſome world, ſo looking *forward* they ſee by *Faith* a ſtate of perfect Holineſs and Happineſs prepared for them. This *Faith* aſſures them, that the *end* of their *fight*, is the beginning of their *Victory*, and as they part from their *labours*, they take poſſeſſion of their *honours* [k]. And doth not any *Apprentice* rejoyce, when the time of his ſervice is near its expiration? I know *Nature* recoils at the approach of *Death* in the beſt, but *Faith* is then of greateſt need and uſe, and the *juſt* may be ſaid to *dy*, as well as to *live by his faith*. Thereby he ſees Life and Immortality juſt before him, and *one* only *miry ſtep* to paſs, and then he is well.

[k] *Pugnæ finis eſt initium victoriæ, & dum finiuntur laboris, accedunt honores.* Rivet. *de ſenect. bon.*

well. Indeed the *idle* man desires not to go to *bed*, but to all that take or suffer pain, saith S. *Chrysostome*[l], an end of it is sweet; the *traveller* gladly beholds his *Inne*; the *hireling* often computes when his *year* is *out*; the *husbandman* greedily expects *harvest*; the *pregnant* woman waits for her expected *deliverance* and the *Aged* person for his *Writ of Ease*.

[l] Chrysost. hom. 49. in Matth.

One would wonder what shift even the *Heathen* made to render *Death* desirable, who had such weak glimmerings of any *other life*. And yet even they would thus argue: *Death*, either it *annihilates* us, or else *translates* us: *Annihilation* will but reduce me into the State wherein *I was*; and if it *translate* me, it will put me into *better* lodgings; my Soul can be no where so *pen'd up*, as here it is in the Body[m]. What *boast* would they have made of *Death*, had they but firmly *believed everlasting life*? For this it was which enabled the *Apostle* to make this expression, *Phil.* 1. 23. —*Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.* For where should the *Spouse* desire to be, but with her *husband*? or where the *members*, but with the *head*? And upon this account, that

[m] *Mors quid est? aut finis est, aut transitus: nec desinere timeo, idem est enim quod non cœpisse: nec transire, quia nusquam tam angustè ero.* Senec. Ep. 65.

that good *Lady Falkland* would uſually ſay, when ſhe was going *to bed*, *Now am I nearer Heaven by one day than ever I was.* The *Aged* perſon ſees a wofull *wilderneſs* behind him, and the bleſſed *land of Promiſe* before him, and therefore no wonder that, with *Moſes*, he longs to be in it. And the *nearer* the holy Soul approacheth its *perfection*, the *more earneſt* and almoſt impatient it is to attain it.

And one great *Advantage* of the *Aged* lies in this; that the *Meditation of Death*, which is then in view, is of great uſe to compoſe the Mind, to keep us in the fear of the Lord *all the day long*, and our Conſciences *void of offence towards God and men*, to work in us a great contempt of the World, and a ſingular freedom of ſpirit and of ſpeech. It will make us neither much to *fear*, nor much to *hope*, or *deſire* any thing, that the world can do *for* us, or *againſt us* [n]; and finally doth greatly conduce, to keep us *ſteady* and *conſtant* in *faith* and *holineſs*.

And if ſome *Ancient* people do not make this *uſe* of their *approaching diſſolution*, what would they or others do, if they did not grow *Old* at all? what a careleſs worldly and vain life would men

n *Facilè contemnit omnia, qui ſemper cogitat ſe eſſe moriturum.* Hieron. *ep. ad Paul.*

men live, if they had no certain Indications of their *dying?* Surely the *nearer* to *Heaven*, the *more heavenly* we ſhould be: as any man when he is come to the *confines* of another *Countrey*, will frame himſelf to the guiſe thereof, ſo he that hath *this hope in him, doth purifie himſelf as he is pure*, and will begin the Life *below*, which he expects to live *above*.

And the other *Privileage* herein contained is this, that being *weary*, they are *near* to their Journeys end. They have bin long toſs'd upon the Sea, and now they ſee the Haven, and rejoyce that they are ready to put into it. This could make *Cato* in *Tully* to ſay, My *old-age* is herein pleaſant to me, that by how much I approach nearer to death, ſo much ſooner do I, as it were, deſcry land, and after long ſailing am ready to enter the *Port*. Not that a good man ſhould deſire to *dye for eaſe*, only to be freed from the troubles of life: all the tribulations of that bleſſed *Apoſtle Paul*, never made him cry out, *O wretched man that I am!* but his *body of death* forc'd him to it. But whil'ſt we carry theſe earthly Tabernacles about us, even the *Sufferings of this preſent time* will make us *rejoyce in hope of the glory of God.*

Eſpe-

Eſpecially when we behold that *innumerable company of Angels*, the *general aſſembly* and *Church of the firſt born*, the *ſpirits of juſt men made perfect*, *yea God the Judge of all*, and *Jeſus the Mediator of the new Covenant*, amongſt whom we are going to reſide in perfect bliſs; then will our *heart* and our *fleſh* cry out, *O when ſhall we come and appear before God!* And this is the *Priviledge* of *Old-age*, that there is but one feeble life between them and a Crown; and you know that he who is *ſhortly* to be inveſted in ſome *Dignity*, feaſts himſelf with the hopes of it [o]. Yea this is the conſtant relief of the *Aged man* under all his bodily, and other temporal afflictions, that they will laſt but *for a moment*. Hold out *Faith* and *Patience*, the *Jubilee is at hand*.

Therefore it behoves all that are *in years*, to lay up for themſelves a *good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life*: to get ſome unqueſtionable *evidence* of their right to the *tree of life*, of their part in *Paradiſe*; and then their thoughts of what's *beyond* death, will ſupport them againſt all events on *this ſide* it, or *in it*. That *Death* is never to be dreaded, ſaith an *Heathen*

[o] *O preclaram diem, cum ad illud amicorum concilium cœtumque proficiſcar & cum ex hac turbâ & colluvione diſcedam!* Cicero.

p Ennius.

*Heathen Poet* p, which is followed with *Immortality*. All your riches, reputation, or friends will then nothing comfort you, like a lively ſenſe of *Chriſt in you*, the *hope of glory*. He that hath *liv'd to God*, will chearfully go *to him*; and they who have *run* with *difficulty*, will *dye* with *eaſe* q.

q *Ante ſenectutem curavi, ut benè viverem; in ſenectute, ut benè moriar; benè autem mori eſt libenter mori.* Sen. ep. 61.

And thus you have an account of *ſome* of the many *Priviledges* of *Old-age*: for beſides all theſe; it is a *Priviledge* to attain to ſuch an Age, as that we may our ſelves *ſee* to the *Education*, and *Diſpoſal* of our *Children*; and alſo to have the *comfort* of their *piety* and *proſperity*. *Thou ſhalt ſee thy childrens children, and peace upon Iſrael*, Pſal. *laſt*. Hereupon it is recorded among, and as the *crown* of the Bleſſings beſtow'd upon *Job*, after his reſtoration, that he *lived an hundred and forty years, and ſaw his ſons, and his ſons ſons, even four generations*, Job 42. 16. From all which we may conclude, that although every *Age* of mans life hath its peculiar *bitterneſs* and *ſweetneſs*, yet all things well weighed, a quiet and honeſt *Old-age* is to be preferr'd before any other age. It is the aſſertion of the learned *Petrarch* r, who thereupon breaks forth into the praiſes of it; concluding them

r *O veneranda ante alias ſenectus! O diu optata! O nequáquam formidata mortalibus! Et ſi noſſe caperis, fœlix ætas: Indignus eſt ad te pervenire, qui te metuit: Indignus pervenisſe qui te accuſat.* Petrarch. *lib.* 8. *ep. ſenil. ep.* 2.

them unworthy to *arrive* at it, that are *afraid* of it, and them unworthy to *poſſeſs* it, that *accuſe* it. So that though we commonly ſay, That every thing is *worſe for its age*, yet a pious *Old perſon* is the *better*; and therefore no man needs to be, as too many are, *aſhamed of their gray hairs*. Foraſmuch as *Old-age*, is *Greater* in *Authority* than any other age, *Richer* in *Experience*, *Freer from ſin*, *Proner to Piety*, *Riper in its Fruits*, *Worthier of Reſpect*, *Further from the World*, and *Nearer to Eternity*. And ſo much for the *Priviledges* of *Old-age*, which is the *Sixth point* to be handled.

## CHAP. VII.

### *The* Work *of* Old-age.

### SECT. I.

AND ſo I come in the *Seventh*, and *Laſt* place to treat, concerning the *Work* and *Buſineſs* of *Old-age*: What *ſpecial* and proper Imployment, beſides their neceſſary and ordinary affairs, *Cap.* 7. The Work of Old-age.

fairs, their *Years* obligeth them unto. Their labouring and travelling dayes are done, but yet they have much *Work* to do. Sith they have *not yet apprehended*, this *One thing* they muſt do, *forgetting thoſe things which are behind, and reaching forth unto thoſe things which are before, they muſt preſs towards the mark.* There is no compleat *reſt* for the *body*, on this ſide the *grave*; nor for the *ſoul*, on this ſide *Heaven*. They that were *Idle* in the *eleventh* hour, were checkt with, *Why ſtand ye here idle all the day?* Matth. 20. 6. You have been buſie a great while for *Time*, it is but reaſonable, you ſhould take ſome pains for *Eternity*. The *ſhadows of the Evening* have overtaken you, ye have but a little time to work in. It was wiſe counſel of the *Wiſe man*; *Whatſoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wiſdom in the grave, whither thou goeſt*, Eccleſ. 9. 10. Behold and ſee how faſt the *ſands* of your glaſs are running; hearken how faſt the *Pendulum* of your Clock haſtens. The Bills of *Mortality*, beſides other *Diſeaſes*, contain ſome *weekly* that dye for *Age*; and which *week* your *Name* will be called,

you

you know not: But when it is called, you muſt go, no *Bail* is taken by *Serjeant Death*. *Bleſſed is that ſervant, whom his Lord when he cometh, findeth ſo doing.* And therefore to uſe the *Prophet Joel*'s words, *Joel* 1. 2. *Hear this, ye Old men, and give ear all the inhabitants of the land:* Suffer the word of Exhortation, and buckle in ſober ſadneſs to theſe *Imployments* of *Old-age*.

§. 1. Repentance of their Sins.

The *Firſt Work* of *Old-age*, is *Repentance of your ſins*. This is a bitter Pill to *fleſh* and *blood*, but it muſt be ſwallowed here or hereafter. When it is taſted here, it is only *bitter-ſweet*, there is comfort *in* it, there is comfort *after* it: It is like the *pains* of an honeſt woman in *travel*, the remembrance of the loving Father ſupports her at preſent, and the birth of a comely child revives her after; but if it be deferr'd, and plac'd on the *wrong ſide of Death*, then it will be *bitter*, *bitter*; there is no preſent, no future comfort: Then it will be like the gnawing *pains* of a woman with a *Cancer*, though infinitely *ſharper*, and infinitely *longer*. So that it is not referred to the *Old-man*, or any man elſe, *whether* he will Repent or not, for it cannot be avoided; but whether he will

repent *for a time*, or repent *for ever*; whether he will repent with *hope*, or repent with *deſpair*.

Now *Repentance* may be conſidered, in a *Double* reſpect. 1. *Initially*, at the *firſt Converſion* of the Soul to God; and 2. *Secondarily*, at the *Renewing* of the *acts* thereof afterwards. It concerns *Ancient* people to be acquainted *reſpectively* with both. This needful meſſage then is directed,

1. To ſuch *Aged* perſons, who are yet in the ſtate of *unrenewed Nature*; who have never paſt through the *New-birth*, nor know any thing by experience of *Regeneration*, which was the Caſe of *Old Nicodemus*, though a *Maſter in Iſrael*, Joh. 3. 9. Now that a *Fundamental Repentance* or *Converſion*, call it how you will, is *neceſſary* to all that ſhall be ſaved, I ſhould think is paſt diſpute. For it cannot be denyed, that we come into the world in a *ſinful* ſtate: And it is manifeſt, that *Baptiſm* doth not cure the Soul of that *Diſeaſe*; but that all people in general have a ſtrong *propenſity* either to the *luſts of the fleſh*, or *to the luſts of the eyes*, or to *pride of life*, until an inward *Change* be wrought in the *heart*; which is the effectual

effectual *Calling* of a careless Sinner, to turn to *God* and *Godliness*. Now if an *Aged* person have been a stranger to this *Grace*, though perhaps he hath led a sober, industrious, just, yea a charitable *life*, and also hath complied with the outward *acts* of *devotion* in use: Yet except the *tree* have been made good by *Regeneration*, it cannot have its *fruit unto holiness*, nor *the end everlasting life*.

I would therefore conjure all such *Unconverted Old* people, to apply themselves with all speed and seriousness to this *First Repentance*; to be *renewed in the spirit of your minds*, to make you *new hearts and new spirits*, or else infallibly you *must dye*. Say not with *Nicodemus*, *How can a man be born when he is old?* For the *Work* is *possible* and the *Method* is *plain*. Harder it may be for an *Old man* to become a *New man*, than for the younger; hence the *Proverb*, *An old naught, will never be ought*: That is rarely, or difficultly, according to the *Greek* saying [f]: For that the *Faculties* of the Soul are *enfeebled*, and the *Habits* of Sin *strengthened* by *continuance*; former guilt and negligence, makes men to doubt of future *assistance* or *acceptance*.

[f] γέρων ἰατρεύειν καὶ γέροντα νουθετεῖν ταυτόν ἐστι.

*ceptance.* But ſince *God* doth call *Old* people to *Repent*, ſith he hath *ſpared* you alive hitherto, and to them that are *joyned to the living there is hope*; ſith there be innumerable inſtances of *Old* Converts: In fine, ſith *God looketh upon men*, and *if any*, mark, *if Any ſay, I have ſinned and perverted that which was right, and it profiteth me not; he will deliver him from going down to the pit*, *Job* 33. 27, 28. Never queſtion the *poſſibility*, but ſet about the work. Set the *Neceſſity* againſt the *Difficulty*, it is *Turn* in Time or *Burn* in Eternity; for *Truth* hath ſaid, *Except a man be born again, he cannot ſee the kingdom of heaven.* How can you imagine that a limb of the Devil, ſhould become a member of Chriſt, a child of wrath become a child of God, but by *Regeneration?* Outward Reformation may ſhave the hair, but this *Leproſie* muſt be cur'd inwardly.

O lay to heart the *long* time you have lived in ſin, and in enmity to God[t]; the *ſhort* time you have to live in the world; that *Death* makes *no Converts*, and *Sickneſs* but a *few*: Conſider what *mercies* and *deliverances* you have received from this good God; and how little *true ſervice* you have done him, and whether it be not now high time to

[t] I repent of all my life, but that part I have ſpent in communion with God, and in doing good, Dr. *Donne* on his Death-bed.

to turn unto him with your *whole heart* and *not feignedly*. If that *Holy man* would not be in an unregenerate ſtate but *one hour* for all the world, leſt he ſhould dye in that hour, what is your pillow, or rather your *heart* made of, that you can ſleep ſo long in a ſtate of Condemnation? To be *born* in ſin is ſad, but to *live* and *dye* in ſin, will prove a thouſand times worſe. Remember that the deſtroying Angels began, at the *Ancient men before the houſe*, Ezek. 9. 6.

Its true, *late Repentance* is *ſeldom true*, but yet *true Repentance* is *never too late*. O then lay all buſineſs aſide, and ſet your ſelves about the *New creature*. *Now or never, now and ever*. If you turn the deaf ear unto God now, beware leſt he deny you either the *ſpace*, or the *grace* to repent hereafter; leſt he anſwer you, *Ubi conſumpſiſti farinam*, &c. where thou haſt ſpent the *flour* of thy life, there beſtow the *bran* of it. Take warning by that *Penitent* in *ſtory*, who had often determined to begin his Amendment from ſome *eminent* time, as the *Firſt day* of the year, or his *Birth day*, that ſo his Repentance might have ſome *Remarkable date*; but when that Time came, he was ready to adjourn it till another time: Who thereupon

concluded, that he would make that *present Day*, though it were obscure in the *Calender*, yet memorable to his Soul by his turning, through divine assistance, unto God.

Do you not perceive how you are in danger to be trapann'd by *Satan*, who suggested to you in the time of youth, that *Repentance* was then *too early*, and who will now perswade it is grown *too late?* ye have deserr'd this work long enough already, now you must use *double* diligence about it. It is said of the *Mulberry tree*, that it casts out its buds latest, but then thrusts them all out in a night: You are late in the *Vineyard*, you must work the harder. The whole business of your life hitherto stands for nothing; if you be not new born, you will *cease to be* in this world, before you *begin to live*[u]; if your *last change* get the start of this *first change*, you will curse the day of your birth to all eternity.

[u] *Quidam tunc vivere incipiunt, cum desinendum est: si hoc judicet mirum; adjiciam quod magis admireris, quidam ante vivere desierunt quam incipiunt.* Sen. Ep. 23.

Now for your *Direction* in this great *Work*, your present business is to get a Competence of *Knowledge*, in the *Doctrine* of *Religion*: and then *searching* your own *Hearts* to compare them with the holy *Law* of *God*. For *example*, look your face in the glass of that *hundred*

*dred* and *nineteenth Pſalm*, or of the *Fifth*, *Sixth*, and *Seventh* of *Matthew*, and then, through Gods help you will preſently find the *diſſimilitude*, yea the *contrariety* between them. And then fix your mind upon the *Wrath* of *God*, hanging over all perſons in your Condition, and upon the ſufficient *ſatisfaction* made by *Jeſus Chriſt* for all that *believe* and *repent*, and *apply* all this to your ſelves. Frequent the ſerious *Preaching* of *Gods word*, and begin to *pray* in good earneſt, *Turn thou me and I ſhall be turned:* and be aſſured, that *Spirit*, which inclines you to the uſe of theſe *means*, will breath life into your *dead and dry bones*, and make you *new Creatures*.

And in caſe you find your ſelves at a loſs in this affair, repair to ſome Able and faithful *Miniſter* of Chriſt, and be not afraid or aſham'd to lay open your Condition, and follow his guidance therein. For if men are not content, in caſe of an *Infirmity* of *body*, to hear the *Phyſick Lectures*, or to read books of *Receits*, but will ſtate their own caſe to the *Phyſician* himſelf; and will do the like to the *Lawyer* in weighty *cauſes* concerning their *Eſtates*, how much more need have you of a *Godly Divine*, to direct

and aſſiſt you in an affair, wherein *body* and *Soul* are at ſtake, and that for *Eternity*? And ſo much for that *Firſt* and *fundamental Repentance*, ſo abſolutely neceſſary for ſuch *Ancient* people, as have ſpent their lives in the ſervice of the world, and the fleſh, and were never truly *converted* unto God.

But beſides theſe, *Repentance* in the renewed *Acts* thereof, is a proper and neceſſary work for *All Old* people whatſoever. You have lived a long time, and through *Omiſſions* and *Commiſſions* have contracted abundance of *guilt* [w]. Trace your ſelves therefore from *place* to *place*, from one *period* of your life to another, and ſtrictly reckon with your ſelves. Study the *Ten Commandments* in their true *extent*; they are called *Ten words*, but they command *ten thouſand Duties*, and forbid *ten thouſand Sins*, many whereof you have *ten thouſand times* failed in, and in divers of them with great *aggravations*: and then ſit down and cry out, *O that my head were a fountain, and mine Eyes rivers of tears*, to bewail theſe offences againſt a gracious God [x]. Upon this account did holy *Auguſtine* in his *Old-age* write his *Confeſſions*; wherein he makes no difficulty to

[w] *Nonne tota vita ob commiſſa damnabilis, vel ob omiſſa inutilis? quid reſtat, ô peccator, niſi ut in tota vita deplores totam vitam.* Anſelm.

[x] *In quantum non peperceris tibi, in tantum Deus, credè, parcet.* Tertul. *de pœn.* c. 9.

*ſhame*

*ſhame himſelf*, that he might give *glory* to *God*. And the *Book* of *Eccleſiaſtes* is judged to be the *Pœnitentials* of King *Solomon*, in his *Old-age*; wherein he plainly confeſſeth his *Vanity*, in ſeeking for *Happineſs* in a vain and vexatious World, and warns all young men to beware of ſuch like folly. Alas if you had fallen but *ſeven* times a day, yet in *ſeventy years* thoſe Sins would have amounted unto almoſt *Two hundred thouſand offences*; and can you reflect upon this without amazement; nay it is a wonder that we do not, as *Nectarius* his *Accuſer* of old, weep out our Eyes for very grief. When the leaves are fallen from the trees, as is aptly obſerved by *One*, the birds neſts are eaſily ſeen, which were inviſible before; ſo when through *Age* our frothy vanities are wither'd, we may palpably diſcover, the ſallies of *Pride*, *Wantonneſs* and *Folly*; yea thoſe neſts of *vermine*, and *vipers* which repleniſhed our youthful dayes.

O that this fleſh had bin compos'd of Snow,
Inſtead of Earth I and bones of Ice, that ſo
Feeling the fervour of my ſins, and loathing
The Fire I feel, I might be thaw'd to nothing.
*Quarles.*

It was the ſober Advice of that *Statesman*, Sir *Thomas Randolph* in his *Old-age*, after he had been *eighteen* times *Embaſſador*

*sador* in forreign parts, to Sir *Thomas Walsingham Secretary* of *State*: It is now time, *sayes he*, for us to leave the *tricks* of State, and to imploy our time before Death in *Repentance*, for the Sins of our Lives. And Blessed be *God* that hath appointed this *Remedy*, and the *Blood of Christ* without which *all* our *tears* could not wash out *one Sin*, that poor Sinners have this *after-game* of Recovery, when they have been undone by Sin! when we have eaten so much of the *forbidden fruit* in our youth, we have need of this *worm-wood* in our *Old-age*. Renew therefore daily the *Acts* of unfaigned *Repentance*, and *take* account duly of your selves, as some of the very *Heathens*[z] have done, sith you must *give* account to God very shortly; and he that *daily* reckons with himself, will have but *one day* to reckon for, when he comes to dye.

z *Quid quoque die dixerim, audiverim, egerim, commemoro vesperi.* Cato in Tully.

But be sure you mistake not the *Nature* of *Repentance*. For it is not only a *Trouble*, an *Anger*, a *Sorrow*; but it is made up of *Grief*, and *Hatred*: *Grief* for the *Offence* to God, and *Hatred* of the *Sins* we grieve for. So that *Repentance* is a turning to God from all sin, with grief for it and hatred of it. And the

the best *Proof* you can give of your *Repentance* for the *Sins* of your *Youth*, is a watchful care against the *Sins* of your *Old-age*: otherwise, your Sins are not *forsaken*, but *changed*. Withal, if your *Repentance* be found, it is attended with a will and endeavour to make *Restitution*, wherein you have injur'd any in their *Souls*, *Bodies*, *Names*, or *Estates*. This will be as *Letters Testimonial* of the truth of your *Repentance*: you must not, nay, you *cannot* be *quiet*, if your *Repentance* be found, until you have seriously endeavour'd, as far as in you lies, to recover the *Souls*, to restore the *Bodies*, to heal the *Reputations*, and to repair the *Estates*, which you have injur'd: without which, there can be no true *Repentance* on *Earth*, and without which, there will be no *Remission* in *Heaven*[a].

a *An melius est damnatum latere, quam palam absolvi?* Tertul. *de pœnit.* c. 10.

## SECT. II.

§. 2. Obtaining of Assurance.

ANother work of *Old-age* is, *obtaining Assurance of Salvation*. I mean hereby, not only a *General Certainty*, that some good people shall be saved; for the *Devils* believe this, and rage at it,

it, which, I think, is the same with *Objective Certainty*; nor that *Assurance* which may come by *special* and *extraordinary Revelation*, sith we find few or no examples in *Scripture* of such a thing; but rather that the *Apostle Paul* himself grounds his Assurance of the *Crown*, upon the *righteousness of God*, which he extends to *all them, that love Christs appearing*, 2 Tim. 4. 8. Neither do I mean a *Conjectural Hope* of *Salvation*, which admits both of *anxiety* and of *slavish fear*; sith the *Scripture* represents it by *Faith*, and *full assurance*, and produceth *Earnests* and *Seals* for confirmation. Nor lastly, is this *Assurance* confin'd to *Grace* at *present*, but extends to *final Salvation*. Thus the *Apostle*, 2 *Tim.* 1. 12. *I know whom I have believed*; there is *Assurance* of his *present* State, but was he certain of his *Perseverance*? Yes, that follows, *and I am perswaded, that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.*

That such *Assurance hath been attained*, is clear enough from the Instances of *Job* 19. 25, 26. of *David*, *Psal.* 16. 9, 10. of *Paul*, 2 *Tim.* 4. 7, 8. and *many* others. That it *may* be *attained*, is as clear; sith there is no intimation that these

theſe, or the reſt, had any *extraordinary Diſcovery* thereof unto them, but arriv'd thereat in the uſe of *thoſe means*, and, by the conſignation of *that Spirit*, unto which we have *acceſs* as well as they. And the *Apoſtle* doth expreſly comprehend the generality of Believers in this *Priviledge*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 1. *For we know, that if our earthly Houſe of this Tabernacle were diſſolved*, we *have a building of God*, &c. That it *ought* to be *endeavoured* by all true *Chriſtians*, is moſt evident from the plain *commands* to that purpoſe, 2 *Pet.* 1. 10. *Wherefore the rather, Brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election ſure*, &c. That few *do labour* to attain it, thinking it to be impoſſible or unneceſſary, is to be bewailed. That *many deceive* themſelves with a falſe perſwaſion of preſent Grace and future Glory, is manifeſt by *Scripture* and daily *Experience*. And that it is moſt *proper* and *needful* for *Old* people, the thing it ſelf ſpeaks.

For you cannot deny but that you have *Souls*, immortal Souls, which being *Spirits* cannnot dye, but muſt return to *God* that gave them: and are theſe Souls of ſo ſmall value to be left to a *Hazard*, to an *everlaſting* venture? And it

is

is as evident, that this *life* is *uncertain*; we may ſay as *Iſaac*, *Gen.* 27. 2. *Behold now, I am Old, I know not the day of my Death*; and therefore it's time for us to go about this work without *delay*. Children deſire the time of youth, and youth longs to be at mans age, and they then would live to be *Old*, but *Old-age* hath no further *Age* to deſire [b], it hath none other to ſucceed it here, and they are wholly uncertain how long it will laſt; and therefore it is abſolutely neceſſary, that they ſhould be on *ſure* grounds for *Eternity*, and then the *day of death will be better than the day of their Birth*. You know how much of your life is already ſpent, you can ſee the *Sands* that are run into the *nether* end of the *Glaſs*, but the *upper* Part is covered with a *Mantle*, you know not how *few Sands* are left there to run. Nay, you cannot but perceive, that *Death* is approaching very near you. You are *filled with Wrinkles which is a Witneſs againſt you, and your leanneſs riſing up in you, beareth witneſs to your Face, as it is*, Job 16. 8. For as it is obſerved of *All* men, that they are *Mortales*, apt to dye, and of all *Good* men, that they are *Mortificati*, dying to Sin; ſo it is of all *Old* men, that they are

[b] *Auguſt.* Ep. 110.

are *Morituri*, about to dye. And for such to have *Oyl* to *seek*, when they should have it to *Use*; Evidences to *procure*, when they should have them to *produce*, is an unexcusable neglect.

Especially knowing, that your *last Breath* wafts you into an *unalterable* Estate. What Journeys and Presents were heretofore made to the *Oracles*, to assure the *Votaries* concerning the Event of some *temporal* affairs! and how many do now Hazard their Souls by seeking to *Necromancers*, to know the success of their Marriages, Voyages, and such like; and yet a *miscarriage* in these things is *remediable*, there may be some *alleviation* in them, there may be some *end* of them: but you are lanching into the *Ocean* of Eternity, and are at no certainty, whether it be eternal *Happiness*, or eternal *Misery*. What an anxious and uncomfortable State must this be? If you were not loose in your *belief* of future things, you would be restless in this condition: you owe your *Ease* to your *Lethargy*; if you were not *half Infidels*, you would be more than *half distracted*. Which brings to mind the course which some Eminent persons among the *Heathens* [c] took, they durst not dye

[c] *Carneades & Chrysilaus.*

*dye sober*, but drank great Draughts of Wine, saying, That *no voluptuous person can go in his Wits into an invisible Estate*. With what poor comfort must that man dye, that must cry out with that *Old Philosopher*; I dye in great doubt, and know not whither I am going; yet *out* the Soul must go, *ready* or *unready*. Then will the careless sinner gnash his Teeth for rage at his slothful and sinful life, which he hath spent *as a Tale that is told*. Then will he have time enough, to curse all the *worldly businesse*, or *wicked Company*, that hath devoured his precious time, and left his Soul to shift for it self for ever.

Do not we in all *other cases* strive to be *at a point*? will *May-be's* and *Peradventure's* satisfie us in any material *humane* affairs? The *Tenant* who is warned out of one *House*, cannot enjoy himself, until he be *sure of another*; The *Steward* that was discharged of his Office, *Luk.* 16. took present course to be provided of some other *Subsistence*; The poorest man is uneasie, when his *old Suit* of Cloaths is worn out, till he have a *new one*; what then are your Souls dreaming on, which find the *Garment* of the Body quite worn out, your *earthly*

ly *Houſe* ready to fall upon its Head, and yet Sleep quiet only with ſome weak *ungrounded hopes* of endleſs happineſs? Have you left your *outward Eſtates* under no better *Aſſurance*? your *Conveyances*, your *Fines* and *Recoveries* will riſe up in witneſs againſt you, and you will be found at laſt to be *wiſe in trifles*, and *Fools* in the things of *moment*. Yea, you will ſee, when Friends and Relations will leave you, your Eſtates and Pleaſures leave you, Life it ſelf leave you, that they who make not *ſure of Heaven*, are *ſure of Nothing*.

Think not, that your *Outward Bleſſings* are any certain *Arguments* of *Gods* love to you; that, becauſe *God* hath done much for you in *this World*, he will therefore Crown you in *another*; or becauſe ye have lived long here in the day of his *Patience*, that you muſt live always with him in Heaven. No, no, *Job* 21. 7. 20. *Even the wicked live, become old, yea, and are mighty in power: yet his Eyes ſhall ſee his Deſtruction, and he ſhall drink of the wrath of the Almighty.* Many a man hath been *ſtrangely* ſaved from *Death*, that will not be ſaved at laſt from *Hell*: and men do hold *temporal* mercies by *one Tenure*, and *Eternal* by *another*.

Be adviſed therefore to ſet about this
eedful work, with all poſſible *ſpeed*
nd *care*. And to that end, chuſe out
*wo* or *three Scriptures*, which do moſt
vidently *deſcribe* a Sanctified Heart;
uch as *Mat.* 5. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. Or
*om.* 8.1.5. 9. and endeavour by the beſt
*helps* you have, to know the true Ge-
nuine *meaning* thereof: Then *compare*
your own Hearts with them. And
whatſoever *doubt* you have of your *Con-
formity* thereunto, *examine* it to the bot-
tom; and in caſe of any inſuperable
*difficulty* conſult with ſome diſcreet
*Meſſenger of God*. And when you have
throughly ſifted one *Scripture*, go to *ano-
ther*, and *another*, that in the Mouth of
*two* or *three* witneſſes, your *Aſſurance*
may be *eſtabliſhed*. And this done, be-
take you to your *Knees*, and ſpreading
theſe tryed Evidences before *God*, hum-
bly beg the help of his *Holy Spirit*; both
to clear your *underſtanding*, to guide your
*Conſcience*, and to *ſeal you up* to the *day
of Redemption*. And then you muſt pa-
tiently *wait* in the uſe of all the means
of *Grace*, *Sermons*, *Prayers* and *Sacra-
ments*, until His *Spirit witneſs with your
ſpirit, that ye are the Children of God*.

SECT.

## SECT. III.

THE *Third Work* of *Old-age*, is *Prayers* and *Praiſes*. 1. For *Prayers*. I do not here mean only the *Ordinary* Devotions, which I preſume every good *Chriſtian* uſeth, both *Old* and *Young*, and whereby indeed the Soul Breaths; for a true Believer *lives by Faith*, and *breaths by Prayer*: whereof that excellent Biſhop *Hall* thus concludes, I may truly ſay, that man hath no Grace nor Goodneſs in him, that Prays not by Himſelf, and with his Family: but alſo that they ſhould be *frequent in Prayer*. It is ſaid of *Luther*, that he ſpent daily at leaſt *Three hours* in *Prayer*. And holy *David* ſaith, *Pſal.* 55. 17. *Evening and Morning and at Noon will I Pray, and cry aloud*: yea, in his *Old-age* we may conclude, that he dyed with a *Prayer* in his Mouth, from *Pſal.* 72. laſt. *The Prayers* (and belike the life) *of David the Son of Jeſſe are ended* together. And therefore the *Egyptian Hieroglyphick* of an *Aged* perſon was a *Swan*, whom they imagined to dye Singing: for there is no Muſick ſo

§. 3. Prayer and Praiſes.

ſweet in the Ears of God, as hearty *Prayers* and *Praiſes*.

And if you find your ſelves unable to hold out in the more *ſtated* and *ſolemn Prayers*, you ſhould be more frequent and fervent in *ſhorter Addreſſes*; for it is not the *length*, but the *ſtrength* of a Prayer that carries it with *God*. And in caſe of the want of *Ability*, or *Opportunity* for this frequency, for every poor crazy *Old* Man or Woman hath them not, you may and ſhould abound in holy *Ejaculations*, or ſhort *Elevations* of the Soul to God; ſometimes by way of *Confeſſion*, ſometimes by way of *Admiration*, ſometimes by way of *Petition*, and ſometimes by way of *Thankſgiving*, of all which there are various *Inſtances* in *Scripture*. And theſe you may dart upward, as you ſit by the *fire*, as you lie in your *beds*, as you put *on* and *off* your cloaths. Thus ye may *pray without ceaſing*, as it is, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 17. And the *Lord* will accept of theſe, coming from a ſincere and holy heart, and which in its preſent circumſtances can do no better. But ſtill Prayer is the proper Province of the *Aged* perſon, and both you and your Pictures will look beſt, when they are (as *Paul the Her-*

*Hermites* carkaſs was) found in a *praying poſture.*

For as was noted before, your labouring and travelling dayes are done, your *Hands* and *Feet* have done their work: the beſt ſervice you can now do is upon your *knees.* There you may do *much*, therein you may ingage Him who can do *All:* nothing can ſtand before the *prayer of Faith.* And therefore, when you reflect upon the ſlips and falls in the courſe of your Life, ſo that your hearts begin to ake and faint for fear, then enter into your Cloſet, and pour out your hearts before *God*, and that will revive you. When that coward *Satan* ſets upon an *Aged* man or woman, with his *Aſſault* and *Battery*, either to weaken their *faith*, or to unravel their *repentance*, or to cloud their *comforts*, their only courſe is to run to God by *Prayer*; *God is a refuge for us.* When we feel the decayes of *Nature*, and are almoſt overwhelmed with *Diſtempers* or *Troubles*, then let us by *Prayer* caſt *our burden upon the Lord*, and *he will ſuſtain us.* Thus that learned and holy *Rivet* [d] did *every* day in his *Old-age* repeat the *ſeventeenth* and *eighteenth verſes* of the *ſeventy firſt Pſalm.*

[d] *Rivet. ep. de bona ſenectute.*

*O God, thou haſt taught me from my youth, and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works. Now alſo when I am Old and gray-headed, O God, forſake me not, untill I have ſhewed thy ſtrength to this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come.*

And here the *Aged* ſhall do well not only to plead their *own Cauſe* with God, but to lay up a ſtock for *Poſterity*, that the generations yet *unborn* may be the better for them. Thus *David*, in that *Pſal.* 72. 1. *Give thy Judgments to the King, O God, and thy righteouſneſs to the Kings Son*, &c. What you are *now* ſowing, may be reaped by your *Poſterity hundreds* of *years* afterwards. And perhaps this will be the beſt *Intail* which you can make of your *Eſtates*, for hitherto whatever *Settlements* the *Will* of men hath *deviſed*, the *Wit* of men hath *defeated*; but by faithfull Prayer, *God* himſelf is made *Truſtee*, who only can eſtabliſh your Purpoſes.

So alſo you ſhould be inſtant with the *Lord* for his *Church*, *Truth*, and *Goſpel*. So was *David*, *Pſal.* 122. So was *Paul*, *always in every Prayer of his*. And we cannot better approve our ſelves to be *members* of that *myſtical Body*, than by our

our inceſſant *Prayers* for the *Increaſe*, the *Unity* and the *Happineſs* thereof. And when you are thinking of your *Countrey*, of your *Kindred*, and of your *Friends*, add an *Ejaculation* to every of theſe your thoughts for a *bleſſing* upon them. Theſe are Employments fit for a *Chriſtian Aged* perſon, and will become them better, than endleſs *Complaints*, or groundleſs *Preſages*. Pray, pray, and do not Propheſie, was holy Mr. *Palmers* ſaying to thoſe, that were alwayes boding miſery. I tell you, that you may do your ſelves, the Church, the Nation, and Poſterity more ſervice by your fervent *Prayers*, than you have done by the *cares* and labours of your whole life.

And then, 2. *For Praiſes*; when you conſider all the *Good* which *God* hath done *In you*, the *Good* he hath done *For you*, and the *Good* he hath done *By you*, you cannot ſure be ſilent. Reflect upon your own Hearts, and remember what a plight you were in, when his Grace and Mercy found you out; what *Methods* he hath uſed to recover you; what *light* and *love* and *life* he hath beſtowed upon you; what outward *Means* and inward *Motions* he hath vouchſafed you; how he hath reſcued you out of

various *temptations*, recovered you out of ſad *relapſes*, ſtabliſhed you in times of *tryal* and defection, and brought you within ſight of the *Promiſed Land*. And then review your whole *Life*, and conſider what great things he hath done *For you*. Obſerve *Old Davids* courſe. *Pſal.* 71. 6. *By thee have I bin holden up from the Womb, thou art he that took me out of my Mothers bowels; my praiſe ſhall be continually of thee.* Remember the care he took of your *Education*, the wonderfull *Preſervations* in your *Childhood*, and *Youth*, when your raſhneſs and folly did every day precipitate you into palpable dangers; how many *ſickneſſes* and *diſtempers* he hath either *prevented* or *healed*; in how many *Journeys* and *Voyages* his *Angels* have had the Charge of you; in what *perils* by day and by night, by Land and by Sea he hath preſerved you. *O remember the works of the Lord, ſurely you ſhould remember his wonders of old.* Pſal. 77. 11. Have you not heard of that *Man*, who having paſs'd over a Plank on Horſeback, over a deep River over night, and being brought in the Morning to ſee his deliverance, fell down *dead* with the *apprehenſion*? How many *Lives* have you had given you?

How

How many *thouſands* have bin cut off, and you have bin ſpared? What a wonder is it, that your *Eyes* and *Limbs* have bin kept ſafe ſo long! Now you are *weak*, but remember how long you were *ſtrong*: now you cannot *eat*, or *ſleep*, as heretofore; but you have loſt your *Regiſter*, if you have forgotten the *chearful meals*, and *reſtful nights* you have enjoyed.

And in reſpect of your *Outward Eſtate*, remember how naked you came into the world, how the *Lord* hath *fed you all your life long*; he it is that hath *given you power to get wealth*, he hath ſtill ſpread your Table, and filled your Cup, and ſent you *more* than ever you *expected*, at leaſt *deſerved*. Remember how merciful he hath bin unto you in your *Names*, in your *Relations*, *Poſterity*, *every way*. And then conclude with *David*, 2 *Sam.* 7. 18. *Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my houſe, that thou haſt brought me hitherto? My mouth ſhall ſhew forth thy Righteouſneſs and thy Salvation, for I know not the numbers thereof. I will hope continually, and will yet praiſe thee more and more.* Pſal. 71. 14, 15. Let *Hallelujah* be your *Song*, as it was the *Motto* of Godly Mr. *Bruen*, which he wrote in the *firſt* leaf of all his

*Books*,

*Books.* Let not your preſent weakneſs and pain, bury your ſenſe of all your former health and eaſe. A *thankfull* life is a *pleaſant* life.

And *laſtly* review the *Good* that God hath done *By you*, that ſtill God may have all the praiſe. You have *wreſtled* with God in *Prayer*, though now you are ſoon faint and weary. You have meaſured many a *ſtep* to hear Gods Word, though now you cannot: and have *read* many a good Book, though now your Eyes be quickly dazled. Many a *Soul* hath bin the better for your *Counſel*, and many *bowels* have bin refreſhed by your *relief*. Now as *God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love*, ſo your remembrance of it in this your *Old-age*, muſt oblige you to renewed thanks and praiſe. Thus *David* in that *Pſal.* 18. which *he ſpake unto the Lord, when he was delivered out of the hands of all his enemies*, toucheth all theſe *Topicks* or *Heads* of Mercies, and then cries out, *verſ.* 46. 49. *The Lord liveth, and bleſſed be my rock, and let the God of my Salvation be exalted. It is God that—Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the Heathen, and ſing praiſes unto thy Name.* Thus will you conjoyn

the Life of Heaven and Earth; you will *end* your Lives with that work, wherewith you will *begin* your Everlasting Life.

## SECT. IV.

§. 4. Instruction of the Younger.

THE *Fourth Work* of *Old-age* is, *Instruction of the Younger*. *God* hath in great Wisdom lodged his various gifts in divers subjects, that there may be a *mutual dependance* one upon another, and a *mutual helpfulness* of each to others. Thus he intrusts the *Young* with *Strength* to support and aid the *Elder*, whose strength is decayed; and the *Aged* with *knowledge* and *wisdom* to guide the younger, whose judgment is yet unripe. And as it is a great misery, when the *Aged* are not relieved by the strength and industry of those that are *young*, so it is a great infelicity, when the *Aged* are either unable or unwilling to instruct, or when those who are *young* are too *careless* or *conceited* to receive Instruction. That is therefore a barbarous Precept in the *Alcoran*, and like the rest of that *Divinity*, *You are not obliged to lead men in the*

*the right way, God guideth whom he liſteth.* But we *have better learned Chriſt.*

The whole Current of *Scripture* runs for this *Practice.* Thus did *Abraham,* as we may gather from *Gen.* 18. 19. Thus *Jacob* — Thus *Moſes,* leaving more eſpecially that excellent *Chapter, Deuter.* 32. juſt before he died, for an *Inſtruction* to thoſe he left behind him. The like did *Joſhua,* in *Cap.* 24. when he was *Aged,* and about to dy. So *Samuel,* 1 *Sam.* 12. So *David,* 1 *Chron.* 28. 9. to his Son. *And thou Solomon my Son,* &c. Thus did *Peter* when he was *ready to put off his Tabernacle,* 2 *Pet.* 1. 12, 13. and the like did *Aged Paul* in his Epiſtle to *Timothy,* when the time of his departure was at hand, 2 *Tim.* 4. 5, 6. So that we have a whole *cloud of Witneſſes,* ſhowring down their counſels and directions on the younger ſort.

And the *Aged* are furniſhed for this *Imployment,* having *Ability* and *Opportunity* for ſuch purpoſes. Their peculiar *Talent* lies this way; For *Dayes ſhould ſpeak and multitude of years ſhould teach knowledge, Job* 32. 9. You muſt have a ſtock of *Obſervations,* and your *Speech* commonly is leaſt impaired of all Faculties; and it is beſt imployed in communicating

ting your uſefull Notions unto others. The *Veſtal Virgins* of old, in the *Firſt* part of their time, learned the Myſteries of their *Religion*, in the *Second*, they produced them into Practice, in the *Third*, they taught them unto others [c]. One end of our learning any thing, is that we may inſtruct *others*. And the *Heathens* [f] thought, that the greateſt part of our time ſhould be devoted to the *Common good*. Hide not therefore your Talent in a Napkin, but produce your Stock, and without impoveriſhing your ſelves, inrich thoſe that need it. You have *Opportunity*, you have your Children and Poſterity about you, you have ſome *Authority* with them, let your words drop *as the dew*, and let your *lips feed many*. What profit have they by your longevity, if you further them not in goodneſs? In ſhort, our lives are little worth, when they are not *uſefull*; and we cannot better beſtow them, than in making others better.

And here is a large field to walk in: You ſhould be able and ready to inſtruct the younger in the *Word of God*, in the Doctrine of the *Goſpel*, in that great myſtery of Godlineſs, *God manifeſt in the fleſh*. The *publick Explications* hereof, ſhould be fami-

[c] *Plutarch.*

[f] *Major pars ætatis certè melior Reipublicæ data ſit: aliquid temporis tui ſume etiam tibi.* Sen. *de br. vit.* c. 18.

familiarly opened by you *at home*. You ſhould talk of them, *as you ſit in your houſe, as you walk by the way, when you lye down, and when you riſe up*, Deut. 6. 7. Thus *David*, *Come ye children, hearken unto me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord*, Pſal. 34. 11. So alſo *Solomon* at large, *Prov.* 4. 1, 2. *Hear ye children the inſtruction of a father, and attend to know underſtanding: For I give you good doctrine*, &c. Thus *Timothy*'s mother, yea and grandmother inſtructed him. You are to inſtruct them alſo in the *Works of God*, both of *Creation* and *Providence*; wherein you may convey to them many things, tending to the glory of your Maker, and the benefit of their Souls. You ſhould acquaint them with ſuch particular *Inſtances* of the Wiſdom, Righteouſneſs, Power, and Goodneſs of God, which you have read, heard or ſeen. That the *generation to come might know them, even the children that ſhould be born, who ſhould ariſe and declare them to their children, that they might ſet their hope in God, and keep his Commandments*, Pſal. 78. 6, 7. You can tell them alſo the *Methods* of *Satan*, and the wicked devices whereby he beguileth poor Souls. As a *Slave* who hath been in *Algier*, and is redeemed

redeemed or reſcued, can diſcover the miſerable *bondage* there, and relate, with pleaſure, the *means* of his Deliverance. You can deſcribe the intriegues of *Sin*, and warn young people of the deceitfulneſs, and folly thereof by your own *experience*. They who have been almoſt mir'd in a *puddle* or *quagmire*, can eaſily ſhew others the *place*, and direct them to avoid it. In Summe, you ſhould inſtruct the younger to *know*, and *ſerve*, and *truſt* in God; and whatſoever you have obſerved in the courſe of your lives conducive thereunto, you ſhould impart unto them. That as ungodly men do wickedly communicate their *ſinful* acts and practices, and endeavour to propagate them unto poſterity, that each generation may be worſe than other; ſo all wiſe and good men, eſpecially when they are *in years*, ſhould tranſmit the knowledge and practice of *Piety* to their Succeſſors, that the next age may be better than this; and that when we are dead and gone, yet it may be truly ſaid, *the world was the better for us.*

Beſides theſe *Inſtructions* in the excellent matters of *Religion*, it lies in the power and way of many *Ancient* perſons, to direct and adviſe the young-

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er in many uſeful *Obſervations* otherwiſe: As concerning the *Education* of their Children, and the diſpoſing of them into *Callings* or *Marriage*; concerning the preſervation or recovery of their *health*. And in caſe they have any peculiar *Skill*, *Receipt*, or *Art* uſeful for the good of Mankind, they ought not to bury it in their graves, but to aſſign it to Poſterity. And whatſoever you have learned or obſerved, that may be *beneficial* or any way *uſeful* to the *Church* or *Common-wealth*, to your *Countrey*, *Town* or *Family*, all theſe *Notices* you ſhould communicate to thoſe that are younger, with all poſſible fidelity and exactneſs. And if need be, commit them to *writing* for the benefit, at leaſt, of your own *poſterity*. And although your *Inſtructions* may not at preſent ſeem to be much *regarded*, yet be not diſcouraged by this; for the wiſe Counſels of the *Ancient*, like the *ſeed of the word of God*, ſeems to dye and to be loſt, and yet in proceſs of time it revives, and brings forth fruit.

Howbeit, there is *Wiſdom* to be uſed in the *Inſtructing* of young people. For they too commonly are proud, conceited, and ſelf-witted: your *Leſſons* there-

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fore muſt be at ſuch *ſeaſons*, and by ſuch *degrees*, as may render them moſt valuable and welcome: and muſt be ſweetned with that *love* and *dearneſs*, and withal interlac'd with ſuch pleaſant *Diverſion*, that their Appetite may not be cloyed, nor your grave Advices be diſtaſted. Thus the *Emperor Auguſtus* accoſted his Hearers. *Audite Juvenes ſenem, quem ſenes juvenem audiverunt*; You that are young, hearken to me, that now am old, whom Old men hearkened unto, when I was yet but young.

Finally, your *Example* ſhould be a *Continual Inſtruction* to young people. They that will not heed your *good words*, yet ſeeing your *good works* will have a conſtant copy before them, and be induced to write after it. The objects of the *Eye* make deeper impreſſion, than thoſe of the *Ear*: When they ſee the conſtant practice of piety and charity, prudence and patience, they conclude that your *Directions* are in good earneſt, that they are practicable, that they are neceſſary, or elſe what the *right hand* of good Counſel builds up, the *left hand* of a looſe practice will pull down.

## SECT. V.

§. 5. Watchfulneſs againſt ſeveral Temptations.

THE *Fifth Work* of *Old-age* is, *Watchfulneſs againſt your ſpecial Temptations.* For beſides the aboveſaid *Sins*, that are moſt uſual in *Old-age*, there are ſome particular *Weakneſſes*, to which they are rather *tempted*, than *overcome*; wherein if they be not *watchful*, they will become *miſerable.* Such as

1. *Diſcontentedneſs of mind.* This is a Diſtemper to which *Old-age* is very liable. They *want* this, and they want that, which perhaps they have had heretofore, and they cannot bear theſe wants. One *loſs* or *croſs* befalls them, and e're they have well digeſted this, another comes. One while this *Diſeaſe* or pain afflicts them, and that no ſooner over, but they are ſmitten in another part, ſo that they are prone to perpetual murmurings. Never was any bodies life ſo miſerable, as theirs; they are ready to quarrel at *God*, at men, at any thing, at nothing g. They are neither *content to live*, nor *ready to dy*; but yet ſeem

g *Omne peccatum impatientiæ aſcribendum.* Tert: *de pat.* c. 6.

ſeem to be fallen out with life, and to be in love with death, whereupon their common note is, *I have lived too long, O that I were in my grave.*

But this Diſtemper argues great weakneſs of *Grace*, yea a great weakneſs of *Spirit*. Hence that *Philoſopher* that ſometimes reſolved, that a wiſe and couragious man ſhould not *flee* from life, how diſcommodious ſoever; but *fairly depart* from it[h]: yet at other times adviſed, to let the wearied Soul out of the uſeleſs body, before its time[i]. A crime of the deepeſt tincture! to ſnatch the *Prerogative* of our *Soveraign Creatour* out of his hands, whoſe rightful priviledge alone it is, to give life to men, and to take it away. And why ſhould you be ſo uneaſie under theſe momentany tryals? Is it not the *Lot*, which your *heavenly Father* hath in great wiſdom, ſet out for you? It is better to be *Old*, and crazy on *earth*, than to have been ſent *young* to *hell*. You have your ailments, and if you were privy to *others mens*, you would be reconciled to *your own*. It was *Socrates* his *Obſervation*, that if every mans burden were laid on a common heap, each man would be glad to take up his own again.

h *Vir fortis & ſapiens non fugere debet è vitâ ſed exire.* Sen. ep. 24.

i *At ſi inutile miniſterium eſt corpus, quidni oporteat educere animam laborantem, & ſortaſſe antequam debet, faciendum eſt: ne cùm fieri debeat, facere non poſſis.* Id. ep. 58.

You should rather be *thankful* to *God* for the *blessings* of the *former* part of your life, than murmur at the *troubles* of the *present*. You think it the only happiness, to have *all the Comforts* of this World; but *Others* have thought it a greater, to have a *Mind above them*. You have, or else the fault is your own, the Company of a *gracious God* and a *good Conscience* [k], when you are uncapable of other company. You should imitate the *Grashopper* [l], to whom the *Old* man by *some* is likened, who is made the *Emblem* of *Contentation*, because she only sucks the dew and sings; and is content with that, hoping, for better. One Crown will swallow up all your Crosses, whereas *Discontent* makes your Condition most *uneasie here*, and most *unfit* for Heaven *hereafter*.

k *Conscientia benè actæ vitæ, multorumque bene factorum recordatio jucundissima est.* Cicero.

l *Tithonus* being very old, was, say the *Poets*, turn'd into a *Grashopper*.

2. *Another Temptation* which you that are *Old* are in danger of, is *Hardness of Heart and Security*. You have sinned *often*, and perhaps repented but *seldom*: you have *heard* and *read* many convincing Sermons, and made but slender *application* of them: you have seen *many swept* away by the hand of God, and *you* have *escaped*: yea some of you peradventure have lived long in some *sinful*

*ful* courſe, are grown *Old in adulteries*, *Ezek.* 23. 43. or in *oppreſſion*, or in ſome other *Sin*. Theſe *things you have done, and the Lord hath kept Silence*, and now you are ready to think, that *He is ſuch a one as your ſelves*, and to bleſs your ſelves in your woful wayes, till your *iniquity be found to be hateful*. The *Aged* perſon ſurely muſt have either a very *tender* heart, or a very *hard* one. If Gods *Ordinanses* and *Providences*, that is *Mercies* and *Afflictions*, have made a due impreſſion upon you, your hearts muſt be very *ſoft*, but otherwiſe, you are in the greateſt danger of a hard heart, and a ſpirit of ſlumber.

Watch and pray therefore, in the fear of God, againſt this dangerous *Temptation*. They are *moſt guilty* of this diſtemper, that were *never afraid* of it[m]. Preſerve a due tenderneſs in your Conſciences, ſuffer not any ſin to ly upon them unrepented. Endeavour to have daily a clearer ſight of ſin, and a deeper ſenſe of the evil of it. Let the exemplary Judgments upon others, ſtartle you. Know, that if you ſleep in ſin, your *Preſervation* will be but a *Reſervation* to ſome fearful iſſue. Remember that *though a Sinner do evil an hundred*

[m] *Ne pergas quærere quid cor durum ſit, ſi non expaviſti, tuum eſt.* Bern.

*times, and his dayes be prolonged*, yet *it ſhall not be well with the wicked*, Eccl. 8. 12, 13. The greateſt *Judgment* that can befall a man upon earth, is to *proſper in any ſinful way*.

There is a *Natural* hardneſs in *All* men, there is an *Habitual* hardneſs in *ſome* men, but there is a *Judicial* hardneſs only *in ſuch*, as are ripe for hell. And the *Firſt*, if it be not cured by *Gods* grace, leads to the *ſecond*, and the *ſecond* prepares for the *third*. Of all ſorts of men, ye that are *Old* have leaſt cauſe to be ſecure, that have one foot already in the grave. The green apple *may* be *pluckt* off, but the ripe one is *falling* off already. But it is not the approach of *Death*, without the effectual influence of *Gods Spirit*, that will ſoften an hardned ſinner; as is too evident in the Malefactors in *Newgate*, that will be drunk and ſwear at a dreadful rate, when they know that the *Execution-day* is certainly at hand. Be inſtant therefore with the *Lord*, to deliver you from *hardneſs of heart*, from a *ſpirit* of *ſlumber* and from a *reprobate ſenſe*.

3. A *Third Temptation* which *Old-age* muſt watch againſt, is, *Slothfulneſs of Spirit*. The decay of *natural Spirits* diſpoſeth

poſeth them hereunto, and *corrupt Nature* joyns with the temptation. It is an *eaſie* thing to be idle, and fleſh and blood is glad enough of excuſes from pains and trouble. Indeed, where natural *Parts*, or natural *Strength* are *waſted*, much cannot be expected, *Job* 30. 2. *Yea, whereto might the ſtrength of their hands profit me, in whom old age was periſhed?* yet that which will releaſe them *in part*, will not do it *altogether*. Time is ſo *ſhort*, ſo *precious*, ſo *irrevocable*, that it ſhould not be ſlept or triſled away, if we can do any thing for the ends of life. The *Aged* perſon muſt conſider, how much *waſt ground* there hath been in the field of his life[n]; how many years are loſt in Infancy and Childhood; how much time at riper years in unneceſſary ſleep and recreations; how much hath been conſumed in doing *nothing*; and how much in doing *worſe than nothing*; and that it is an *eaſie* thing to *loſe* time, that it is an *hard* thing to *redeem* time, and that it is an *impoſſible* thing to *recall* time; and therefore they who have loſt ſo *much* time, and can *recall none* of it, had need to *redeem*, and make the beſt of that which *is left*. Few men will throw

n *Exigua pars eſt vitæ, quam nos vivimus, non exiguum temporis habemus, ſed multum perdimus. Re omnium pretioſiſſimâ luditur.* Sen. *de brevit.*

away their *money*, but moſt men ſquander away their *lives*; being moſt prodigal of that wherein we may moſt juſtly be covetous, as the ſame *Philoſopher* diſcourſeth.

Let no *Aged* perſon imagine, that they are to live to no purpoſe. The *Levites*, though at *Fifty* years of age, they were diſcharged from the moſt *laborious* ſervice of the *Temple*, yet they were not left to be Idle, but to do the work of the *Lord* in ſome more eaſie imployments. *Tully* brings in *Cato* telling how he learned Greek in his *Old-age*, and that even at thoſe years no body came to ſee him, but they found him imployed[o]: and he reports of *Leontius Gorgias*, who was an *hundred and ſeven* years old, and yet never was weary of his ſtudies and labours. The truth is, ſloth is a vice that accelerates *Old-age*, as you heard before, and abetts that languiſhment of the *Spirits* which furthers it. We ſhall not *feel* it ſo ſenſibly, while we are continually imployed[p]. How much knowledge and wiſdom have we neglected, which we might have obtained, if our *ſloth* had not beguiled us?

Hence comes *Neglect* of the *means of Grace*

[o] *Animus fuit victor annorum.* As *Bernard* ſaith of *Humbertus.*

[p] *Semper enim in iis ſtudiis laboribuſque viventi, non intelligitur quando obrepat ſenectus.* Cicero.

*Grace*, to which we may adde *Drowſineſs* in the uſe of them. Aged people are apt to ſatisfie themſelves in the *Omiſſion* of *Reading*, *Hearing*, *Praying* by their crazineſs and infirmities. Indeed when we are inevitably hindred in theſe *Means*, and are *grieved* for that hindrance, *God* will ſupply thoſe wants; but if we be glad that we have an occaſion comen in the way, whereby we may, without ſin omit our duty, it ſavours ſtrongly of hypocriſie. And *Old* people are more concern'd than *others* to be diligent herein; for many of them have put off much of their greateſt buſineſs to their *Old-age*, and therefore their plea of *Impotence* will be *overruled*. *I have loſt a World of time*, ſaid the learned *Salmaſius* on his death-bed; *If I had one year longer, I would ſpend it in reading* David's *Pſalms, and in* Paul's *Epiſtles*. Neither imagine, that you are too old to *learn*: for the *Fundamentals* of *Doctrine* and *Practice* may eaſily, and muſt neceſſarily be learned, elſe *he that made you will not ſave you, and he that formed you will ſhew you no favour*, *Iſa.* 27. 11. As weak as you are, you could creep to the *Aſſembly* to be laden back again with *Gold*; and a grain of grace

grace is worth a world of riches. When ſome outward ſickneſs afflicts, you find a man carried *in a bed* to *Chriſt*, and the houſe *untiled* to let him down through the *roof*, rather than continue under it, *Luk.* 5. 18. and will you languiſh in your ſpiritual diſtempers, and uſe no means for healing? Be not deceived, God is not mocked: he never accepts the *will* for the *deed*, if the *deed can* well be *done*; nor chuſes *Mercy* before *ſacrifice*, where *both* may be *offered*.

And though your Years may diſpoſe you to Drowſineſs in the ſervice of God, yet they will not wholly excuſe you. We read but of one perſon in the *Bible*, that *ſlept* at Sermon, and he was taken *up dead* thereby, *Act.* 20. 9. It is a ſin charged on them of old, *Iſa.* 64. 7. *There is none that calleth on thy name, that ſtirreth up himſelf to take hold on thee.* You ſhould uſe all poſſible *means* to ſhake off that drowſie diſtemper, and ſet the holy *God* before you, and remember that your own cauſe is ſtill *pleading* or *trying*; that the *diligent hand* makes *rich* in *this world*, and the *diligent heart rich* for *ever*; and that *Grace* and *Comfort* are like the *Manna*, which was to be gather'd *early*, or elſe it vaniſhed:

they

they that loved their *beds*, ſtarved their *bellies*. How much good might you do and get, notwithſtanding your years, if you would ſhake off that *ſlothful* diſtemper, that haunts you? how many have lamented at their end their loſs of time? Nothing ſo much troubled that Excellent *Preacher*, *Dr.* Robert Harris, when he was on his *death-bed*, as *Loſs of time*. Rouſe up then your benumbed ſpirits, your time of *Action* will laſt but a while. Conſider, wherein you are capable to *ſerve your generation by the will of God*, and up and be doing. The Grave will be moſt *irkſome* to the *loyterer*, but moſt *welcome* to the *labourer*, for there *the weary*, and only they *will be at reſt*.

4. The *Fourth Temptation* which *Aged* perſons are liable unto, is, *Expectation ſtill of longer life*. No man is ſo *Old*, ſaith the *Orator*, but thinks it very poſſible to weather it out a year longer[q]; and ſuch men do, upon the matter, think they may live *always*. It hath been an old *complaint*, that men *eat* and *drink*, as though they muſt *dye to morrow*, and yet *buy* and *build* as though they muſt *live always*. How uſual is it with very *Aged* men and women, to contrive and

[q] *Nemo eſt tam ſenex quiſe annum non putet poſſe vivere.* Cicer.

and appoint affairs for a *month*, or a *year* beforehand? It is not only young perſons that ſay, *To day or to morrow we will go into ſuch a City, and continue there a year, and buy and ſell and get gain. Whereas you know not, what ſhall be on the morrow. For what is your life? it is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vaniſheth away*, Jam. 5. 13, 14. But even *Old* perſons are apt to think the ſame thing. The moſt *decrepit* perſon fancies he ſhall abide here a *little longer*; and when that time is expir'd, ſtill reckons to continue a *little longer*[r].

[r] *Quotidiè morimur, quotidiè mutamur, & tamen æternos nos eſſe credimus.* Hieron *ep. ad Helvid.*

The folly and ungroundedneſs of this *Imagination*, is obvious. For what ſhould induce one that is already *dying*, to think that he ſhall not very quickly *dy out and out?* Alas! Death hath laid its *cold hand* already upon us[s]. Our *Eyes*, our *Ears*, our *Hands*, our *Legs*, our *Lungs*, our very *Vitals* are death-ſtruck already. Death puts in for a ſhare in every day we ſpend[t]. Have we taken any *Leaſe* of our lives, for a determinate time? Can we produce any *Reaſon*, any *one Reaſon* to prove that we ſhould live *a year*, or a *week* longer? I am ſure the provoking *Sins*, which are in our *Souls*, and the unruly

[s] *Seni mors in januis eſt.* Bern. *ep.* 185.

[t] *Hunc ipſum diem quem agimus cum morte dividimus.* Senec. *ep.* 24.

unruly *Humours* which are in our *Bodies*, render our ſpeedy death more likely, than a longer life: beſides the rage of *Satan* againſt us, and the many *Caſualties* incident to us. Now when a man *expects* any thing, and hath no *reaſon* for ſuch his expectation, it is lamentably ridiculous.

But what little *Reaſon* ſoever there is *for* ſuch an Imagination, there is ſome *Cauſe of it:* And the cauſe ſeems to be a *Lothneſs to dy.* Too few there are, that are willing to part with things *ſeen*, for things *unſeen* [u]. They are loth to go out of this world of *men* and *women*, into a world of *Souls.* Death is like a cup that will either *mend* or *end*, and ſuch a doſe is taken with a trembling hand. And therefore the heart cryes out, *Let me alone this year alſo.* Thus men would *put far from them the evil day*, and it will prove an *evil day*, when it is thus deferr'd. Alas! it is not the *duration* of ones life, but the *goodneſs* and *comfort* of it, that is conſiderable. This the dim eye of *Nature* ſaw and concluded, that a wiſe man chuſes to live as long *as he ought*, not as long *as he could* [w]. I know it is a hard pluck, to have a Soul and a body that have

u *Mors omnibus eſt finis, multis remedium, paucis [probis] etiam votum.*

w *Non enim vivere bonum eſt, ſed bene vivere. Itaque ſapiens vivit, quantum debet, non quantum poteſt,* Sen. Ep. 70. *Quomodo fabula, ſic vita: non quamdiu, ſed quam bene acta, refert.* Id. Ep. 76.

have lived long together, to part a-ſunder: but it is irrevocably appointed unto men to dye; and when a thing is indiſpenſably neceſſary, it is the beſt courſe to conſider what will beſt *mitigate*, and render it either *deſirable* or *tolerable*. Wherein as right *Reaſon* may contribute much, ſo *Chriſtian Religion* much more; whereby the holy *Soul* is aſſured of a far better houſe, than the *body*, and the *body* of a far *better eſtate*, after it hath ſlept a while in the grave.

To *Remedy* therefore this *Temptation*, Conſider the *Folly* and *ill Effects* thereof. That is a fooliſh *Traveller*, who being quite ſpent with the fatigue of his journey, would turn again and travel it over again; when as nothing is more welcome to the weary than a *quiet lodging* [x]. Upon occaſion of this groundleſs Expectation in that rich man, *Luk.* 12. our *Saviour* plainly calls him, *Thou fool*: For it is the rankeſt folly, to expect when winter is coming, that it will relent and retire again, becauſe we diſtaſt it. No more will *Death* forbear us, but when our *Name* is *called*, we *muſt go*.

But this vain expectation of a longer life *unfits* us for *Death*, it keeps the Soul ſecure and careleſs, we deferr that till

x Every bird is on the wing to its neſt. Every traveller his mind is ſtill on home, home. This was *Barzilla's* Song, *&c.* Dr. *Harris.*

till *to morrow*, which ſhould be done *to day*; we loſe the *preſent* time, and diſpoſe of the *future* which is not in our hands, but in *Gods*[y]. This cauſes Men to procraſtinate their *Repentance*, to deferr the *Good works* which they have purpoſed to do, yea the very making of their *Laſt Will* hath been protracted hereupon by many, until they have bin *uncapable* to do it. Let all *Aged* perſons therefore be adviſed, to ſet *Death* each morning between themſelves, and the enſuing night; and every *night* make that reaſonable ſuppoſition, that it may arreſt you before *morning*: The meſſenger that you have ſo long looked for, will not amaze you, when he comes. As the meeting of a ſtroke breaks the force of it, ſo the *Sting of death* is in a great meaſure loſt, when we are *firſt* aware of it. He that in this reſpect *dyes daily*, will eaſily and happily dye at laſt.

[y] *Maximum vivendi impedimentum eſt expectatio quæ pendet ex craſtino; perdit hodiernum: quod in manu fortunæ diſponis, quod in tua dimittis.* Sen. de br. vit. c. 9.

## SECT. VI.

THE *Sixth Work* of *Old-age* is, *Providence for Poſterity*. Too many when they are going out of this World, care

§. 6. Providence for Poſterity.

care not what becomes, either *Temporally*, or *Eternally*, of thoſe that ſhall come *after them*. And accordingly will neither *plant a Tree*, nor *repair an Houſe*, nor do *any thing* for the benefit of *Poſterity*. They cry, *It will ſerve our time*: and ſo ſuffer all things to go to ruine, becauſe they are removing into another world themſelves; yea and *commit*, or *permit wilfull waſt* divers ways, for ſomepreſent ſmall advantage, leaving great inconveniences to their Succeſſors: whereas the very *Heatheus* had better *principles*, and injoyned their *Old* men to *plant trees, &c.* which might be uſefull to another *Generation*[z]. Thus a man may be benefiting others ſtill, *after he is dead* and gone, and *God* may be praiſed for your care and kindneſs, by them which ſucceed you.

[z] *Serant arbores, que alteri ſeculo proſint.* Cicero *ex* Statio.

And *another* ſort there are, that in ſtead of leaving any *Bleſſing* or benefit, do lay up a *Curſe* for their *Poſterity*; by leaving them *Eſtates* which they have got by *Fraud* and *Injuſtice*, or ſome *unconſcionable courſe*; which is the ready way to melt away the reſt how juſtly ſoever obtained. You cannot invent a more compendious and infallible means to undoe all your *Poſterity*, than by transferring to

to them *Goods* or *Estates* indirectly gotten: for *God is righteous*, and will not prosper unrighteous dealings. *Those riches will perish by evil travel, and he begetteth a Son, and there is nothing in his hand.* *Eccl.* 5. 14.

But if you have any care or concern for your *Posterity*, lay up a stock of *Prayers* for them, and leave them, as is aforemention'd, wholsome and good *Rules* concerning *Piety*, *Equity* and *Charity*. Leave them an Account of your own *Experience* in all things material; that so, if they have any brains, they may *cheaply learn* what you have *dearly bought*. And especially leave them a Copy of your own good *Example*, which will be a constant *Monitor*, and *Check* to them in the whole course of their conversation.

But these having bin touched before, that which remains for the *Peace*, *Comfort* and *good* of *Posterity*, is a *Prudent* and *seasonable Settling* of your *outward Estate*. It is strange to see the great backwardness of many *Aged* persons to this work, as if making their *Will* would either *lessen their Estates*, or *shorten their Lives*, a gross and groundless *Opinion*; whereas the neglecting of this affair, hath a train of very *ill consequences*;

particularly, many of the moſt tedious *Suits of Law* are occaſion'd thereby, mutual *Love* among *Relations* ſpoiled, the *poor* overcome by the *rich*, the *ſimple* by the *cunning*, the *Orphan* by the *Guardian*, and very often the *whole Eſtate* ſquandred away in trying for it. What a folly is this, to neglect that which would both quiet your own *minds*, and preſerve quiet among them that *come after*? *Ten lines* diſcreetly written, would prevent *ten thouſand lines* when you are dead. When the *Lord* therefore ſent a Meſſage of *Death*, by the *Prophet Iſaiah*, to King *Hezekiah*, he commanded him to *ſet his houſe in order*, Iſa. 38. 1. as if that work muſt of right go before his death. The *Aged* perſon then ought to preſent this Meſſage daily to his Soul, *Man, Woman, ſet thy houſe in order*. For ſince it is uncertain in what *place*, or in what *moment Death* waiteth for us; it behoves us to wait for it in every *place*, and every *moment*, and conſequently to ſet not only the *heart*, but the *houſe* in *Order*.

And in the doing of this work, let *Reaſon* and *Judgment* over-rule *Paſſion* and *Affection*. If need be, adviſe in *Law*; the neglect whereof renders the *Teſta-*

*ments*

*ments* of many perſons nothing, but *Bones* of *Contention*; and ſo the *ſparing* of a ſmall *Fee* at preſent, proves the *ſpending* of many in a ſhort time. But however, weigh your Purpoſes in a good *Conſcience*, and remember that you are only *Deputies* under *God*, *whoſe you are*, and your whole *Eſtate*; that it be ſo *Deviſed*, as may agree with his *Revealed will*. Think with your ſelves, what judgment wiſe, and impartial perſons will paſs upon your Diſpoſals, when you are in the grave. *Pray* therefore unto *God* on this occaſion, that he would firſt *Direct*, and then *Eſtabliſh* your Purpoſes, which is the likelieſt way to bring them to paſs.

And diſpatch this affair *Timeouſly*, while you are in health and ſtrength. For you can never do it as you *would*, nor perhaps as you *ſhould*, when you are in the *power* of thoſe, that ſtand waiting for your Eſtate [a]. They who are ſo weak, that they muſt be beholden to their Relations, for every *Refreſhment* they have need of, cannot have the *liberty* or *opportunity* to order their affairs in an *impartial* manner. What if upon the *alteration* of your circumſtances, you reviſe your *Will*, and alter it every year? Is it not much better to be at that trouble,

[a] *Diſpone de rebus ante mortem: ſæpe quis efficitur infirmitatis ſervus, teſtari non poteſt: ſiber ergo teſteris antequam ſervus efficiaris.* Bern.

than either to deferr it till you can make *none at all*, or *ſuch* as muſt ſavour greatly of your preſent *weakneſs?* Do not imagine, that the Expedition of this, will *haſten* your Death. For what influence or efficacy can *this* have, to procure any ſuch *effect?* It were eaſie to produce thoſe, that have never bin without a *Will* written and ſealed, for *Thirty* or *Forty* years together. It affords a man great ſatisfaction, in caſe any *ſudden ſickneſs* ſeize upon him, that he hath nothing of any earthly affairs to trouble him, nothing to do but to *bear*, or to be *relieved* of his diſtemper. For when our *inward* State is fixed, and our *outward* State is ſettled, yet we ſhall find it work enough, to grapple with the *diſquiets* of a *diſeaſe*, and with the *pangs* of *Death*.

## SECT. VII.

§. 7. Mortification to Sin and to the World.

THE *Seventh Work* of *Old-age*, is, *Mortification*. And the *Object* hereof is *double:* 1. That which is *Evil in it ſelf*. 2. That which is *Lawful in it ſelf*. The *Religious Old* perſon hath work in both theſe.

1. One

1. One great work of *Old-age* is *Dying to ſin*, to all ſin. *The time paſt of our life may ſuffice us to have walked in laſciviouſneſs, luſts, exceſs of Wine, revellings, banquettings*, &c. 1 *Pet.* 4. 3. We have ſinn'd *enough* already, yea much more than enough; it is high time to *undo* that which hath almoſt *undone* us. *We* are *dying*, it is neceſſary that our ſins *dy* before *us* [b], and that by *Faith* in the death of Chriſt, and *Repentance* from dead works; for want of which courſe, our *Evidences* prove litigious, and ſnarled with inextricable doubts. It is not enough, that we want *ſtrength*, or *opportunity* to ſin, but our *wills* and *deſires* towards it, muſt be *dead* alſo. Sin is only *aſleep*, or *benumbed* in us, if we have not uſed *Gods means* to crucify it. It's not ſufficient that we *leave* it, except we *loath* it. Go through-ſtitch therefore with this work; do it *quickly*, do it *ſincerely*: it is, *Kill* or *be Kill'd*, and neceſſity makes the *Coward* reſolute. Dread not any *Scriptural ſeverities* neceſſary in *Mortification*. Some *Devils* are not caſt out without *Prayer* and *Faſting*; and *Hippocrates* [c] obſerves, that *Old-age* is the fitteſt for the uſe of *Faſting*. The wounds that ſin hath made, muſt be ſearched to the bottom, and

b *Hoc denique tibi citra mortem præſta: moriantur ante te vitia.* Sen. ep. 27.

c *Hippocr.* Aph. 13.

doubtleſs it is never crucified, no more than *Chriſt* was, without *pain*.

How juſtly doth the *Scripture* ſtill ſtigmatize *ſin* with the name of *Folly*? to weave a Webb that muſt be unrav'led; and to make us ſpend our lives between *ſinfull joyes*, and *painfull ſorrowes*. And though *Old-age* doth not mortify ſin by it ſelf, yet cooling our luſts and paſſions, it proves helpfull in that work[d]; and provided, we be truly *thankful* unto *God* for that advantage, and that we uſe other neceſſary *means* to that end, we may comfortably acquieſce in that bleſſed effect; and rejoyce that the things which are *diſpleaſing* to *God*, are become *unpleaſant to us*. But we muſt not be content to be only *paſſive*, in the decayes of ſin; we muſt be *active* in that work. *If ye, through the Spirit, mortifie the deeds of the Body, ye ſhall live*, Rom. 8. 13.

d *Si voluptatem aſpernari ratione & ſapientiâ non poſſumus, magnam habendum ſenectuti gratiam, quæ effecerit, ut id non liberet, quod non oporteret.* Cicer.

And as *All ſin* muſt be the *Object* of *Mortification*, ſo eſpecially all *Youthful ſins*[e]. For as *Chryſoſtom* ſays, An *Old* man acting *juvenile ſins*, is far more ridiculous than young perſons, that commit thoſe ſins. To have our hearts

e *Hoc quidem pejus eſt, quod autoritatem habemus ſenum, vitia verò puerorum; nec puerorum tantùm, ſed etiam infantum.* Sen. ep. 16.

*burn*

*burn* with *Luſt*, or *Revenge*, when our *veins* are *freezing* with *Age*, the ſoul rampant and the body dying, is monſtrous[f]. And yet we know, how S. *Hierom* himſelf complains of ſcalding motions, that were ready to invade his withered body. And the *Scripture* gives us a ſad *Inſtance* hereof, even of *Solomon* the beſt and wiſeſt of men alive, that had *done* more *for God*, and *God for him*, than any man in the age he lived in; that he when he was between *Fifty* and *Sixty* years of age, ſhould be ſo far inſlaved to his *ſtrange wives*, as to be carried by them to worſhip *ſtrange gods*. *For it came to paſs, when Soloman was Old, that his wives turned away his heart*, &c. 1 Kin. 11. 4. Whereby he ſet in ſuch a cloud, as hath drawn his very *Salvation* into queſtion. Let it be a warning to all *Aged* people, to ſee that their Corruptions be not *aſleep* but *dead*, as far as is attainable in this life; that the *Old man*, as well as the *outward man* periſh, and which will be a good proof thereof, that the *inward man be renewed day by day*. That our *Thoughts*, our *Words*, our very *Behaviour* and *Attire* proclaim, that Sin and we are *parted* never to meet again. It was a good

[f] *Anus quum ludit, morti delitias facit.* Sen.

anſwer of a *Lacedemonian* to one that asked him, why he wore his *Beard ſo long? Anſw.* It is to mind me, that I do nothing unbeſeeming my *hoary hairs*. A light behaviour in a grave perſon is fooliſh and loathſome: For *as dead flies cauſe the ointment of the Apothecary to ſend forth a ſtinking ſaviour; ſo doth a little folly, him that is in reputation for wiſdom and honour*, Eccl. 10. 1.

2. The *Other Object* of *Mortification* proper for *Old-age*, is *The World* and all the *innocent*, but *charming* vanities thereof. Not that they are bound *actually* to forſake the World, either the needful *cares*, or the lawful *comforts* of it: But to wean and abate their *deſires* of it, their *delights* in it, their *cares* about it g. This ſhould be every Chriſtians work, but it ſhould be the *Aged* perſons care, in a more eminent meaſure. For they are ready to *leave* this world, and *aſcend* into another; and every one takes off their mind from an *houſe* they are *leaving*. The world alſo is forſaking *them*, the pleaſure they have formerly taken in meats, apparel, building, is much decayed; the things which did formerly raviſh, are now grown inſipid; and doth not this call aloud to them

g When one *Similis* a great Captain in *Adrian's* time had retir'd into the Countrey *ſeven* years before he died, he cauſed this *Epitaph* to be prepared for him. *Similis hic jacet, cujus ætas quidem multorum annorum fuit. Septem tamen duntaxat annis vixit.*

them to real *Mortification?* you ſhould moſt readily conſent to part with them, and ſay, Farewell my gold and all my gayeties, I meant not to *injoy*, but *uſe* you, *I can be happy without you.*

It is the abſurdeſt ſight in the world, to ſee one *gaping* and graſping after *this world*, when he is *going into another. Let your moderation be known unto all men, the Lord is at hand*, Phil. 4. 5. Your loyns ſhould be always *girded about, and your lights burning, and ye your ſelves like unto men that wait for your Lord*, Luk. 12. 35. *I write unto you Fathers, Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world*, 1 Joh. 2. 14, 15. Abate your love to things below, and increaſe your love to things above: Nothing can overcome *love* but *Love*, love of *earthly* things, but the Love of *heavenly* things, as nothing can fetch out *fire* like *fire*. O when we do love all theſe things *for God*, we will willingly leave them all to go *to God*, for whoſe ſake only we valued them. Otherwiſe you will find it an hard pluck to leave them, even like the plucking the *Skin off* your hand; whereas the heart that is mortified to them, can part with them, as eaſily as you can draw

draw the *glove off* your hand. How readily did *Moſes* go up into the mount, and dye? what little noiſe or diſpute did *Jacob*, or *David*, or *Paul* make about leaving the world? They were dead to it before. He that ſaid *I am ready to be offered*, had ſaid before, *the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world.*

So that the *Aged* perſon ſhould be mortified to *Life* it ſelf; he ſhould be very well content to dy. It was a ſad Confeſſion of *Cæſar Borgia* that ambitious *Grandee*, when he was near his end, that he was prepar'd for every occurrent but *Death*; which was the *only* thing that he ſhould have been moſt ready for. But 'tis *Grace*, not *years* that makes us dead to the world, and to the deſire of Life [h]. When the *Aged* man hath made it his buſineſs to honour God, to ſave his own ſoul, and to ſerve his own generation, he may with unconceivable comfort ſay with *Old Simeon*, *Lord, now letteſt thou thy Servant depart in peace*; I have done with this life, welcome be the grave, welcome everlaſting life.

h *Ut ſatis vixerimus, nec anni nec dies faciunt, ſed animus; vixi quantum ſatis erat: mortem plenus expecto.* Sen. *ep.* 61.

SECT.

## SECT. VIII.

THE *Eighth Work* of *Old-age* is, *Laying up a treaſure in Heaven.* Where by *Heaven* I underſtand not only the *Place*, but the *Nature* of the *Treaſures*, *heavenly Treaſures*. Some of theſe the *Aged* will have need of *Before Death*, of ſome *At Death*, of ſome *After Death*. §. 8. Laying up a Treaſure in Heaven.

1. You ſhould lay up for your ſelves a *Treaſure* of *Prayers*, and *Promiſes* to ſupport you before *Death* comes. Of *Prayer* I have ſpoken before; but there are *Promiſes* that are very comfortable and very neceſſary for *Old* people; which they who are aſſured of *Gods Veracity*, and their *own Integrity*, may apply to themſelves, as if individually directed unto them. The *Apoſtle* makes that inference from that excellent *Promiſe*, which hath more value in it, than all the *Old* mans *baggs* and *bonds*, Heb. 13. 5. *I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee*; whence he inferrs, *verſ. 6. So that we*, even we, *may boldly ſay, The Lord is my helper*. Another *Promiſe* there is, moſt

moſt comfortable for *Ancient* people, *Iſa.* 46. 4. *Even to your Old-age I am he, and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear, even I will carry, and will deliver you.* When our feeble *legs* will not *carry* us; when the *pillars* of the *houſe tremble*, and in effect cry out, *we can bear you no longer*; then will the power and goodneſs of God *carry us* up and *deliver us*, yea when we approach to *Death*, and fear preſents it, and the grave moſt formidably, we may then apply what the *Lord* ſpake to *Old Jacob*, concerning his going down into *Egypt*, Gen. 46. 3. *I am God, the God of thy father, fear not to go down into Egypt: For I will go down with thee, and will alſo ſurely bring thee up again.* So aſſuredly will the *Lord go down* with us to the grave, and as ſurely *bring us up* again, and how can we be afraid with ſuch *company*, and with ſuch a *promiſe?* Hoard on ſtill, there is another gracious *Promiſe*, Pſal. 23. 4. *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me, thy rod and thy ſtaff they comfort me:* More yet, *Pſal.* 48. laſt. *For this God is our God for ever and ever, he will be our guide even unto death.* Theſe and

and ſuch like *Promiſes*, left by him that *cannot lye*, will ſupport the ſinking ſpirits of a poor *Chriſtian* more than all the *friends*, the *cordials*, the extrinſick *comforts* in the whole world.

2. *At Death* you will need a *Treaſure* of *Faith* and *Patience*. The reign of *Senſe* is expired; ſomewhat is neceſſary to ſupport a *dying* man, more than a *living healthy* man. What is it that makes *Death* terrible to a poor creature? The *withdrawing* of all a mans outward *comforts*, and the *Appearance* of all his *Sins*: When one is dying, they muſt leave husband, wife, children, parents, friends, houſe, all. Now *Faith* will give us a real *ſight* of the other world; and one ſight of *that* quite *diſgraces* and *annihilates* all the comforts of *this* world. Adieu poor houſe, I ſee a far better ready for me! adieu my deareſt friends and relations, I ſee thoſe enjoyments before me, that utterly eclypſe you all! And then, when your *Sins* are muſtered up before you, their heinous *nature*, and deſerved *puniſhment*, and that *Satan* beſtirs him, to repreſent them with the greateſt Terror, to the *Aged* dying perſon; if *Faith* be dormant, the poor ſoul is driven into the pit of *deſpair*.

ſpair. But a lively *Faith* flies to *Jeſus Chriſt*, runs into his wounds, lays hold on his everlaſting righteouſneſs, and ſo bids defiance to *Satan*, yea even to the *law*, and all his *ſins*, with, *Who is he that condemneth? It is Chriſt that dyed.* It is related in an *Epiſtle* prefixed to *Brentius*'s works, that when a certain *Senator* in *Suevia* lay dying, one like a *Scribe* came into his chamber with pen and paper, calling to him to reckon up his *ſins*; for, ſaith he, I am ſent from *God* to bring an account of them to his *Tribunal*: Well, ſaith the *Sick man*, raiſing up himſelf as well as he could, and perceiving that he had to do with his great Enemy, the *Devil*; write this down *firſt*, *The ſeed of the woman ſhall break the ſerpents head*, and thou mayſt write all my ſins under it: Whereupon the *Accuſer of the brethren* preſently vaniſhed, and left the weak man in peace.

And you will have need of *Patience* alſo, that after ye have *done* and *ſuffered* the *will of God*, ye may *receive the promiſe*, Heb. 10. 36. So *acute*, or elſe *tedious* are ſome *Diſtempers*, that they will ſtrain all the nerves of the Soul, to wreſtle with them. Lay up therefore, by diligent reading, hearing, meditation,

ditation, and Prayer, a ſtock of theſe *Graces*, before the evil day come. Theſe are the true riches, and which neither the fire can burn, nor the plague infect, nor time waſt, nor thieves purloyn.

3. And *laſtly*, It behoves the *Aged* to lay up a *Treaſure*, which they may meet with *After death*; to wit, of *Good works*. In this life is your *ſeed time* for theſe; and they that ſcatter this precious ſeed, *ſhall doubtleſs*, mark, *doubtleſs they ſhall come again with rejoycing, bringing their ſheaves with them*, Pſal. 126. 6. *Faith* and *good works* may well agree in a *Chriſtian*, and though they cannot cooperate to a mans *Juſtification*, (for though both of them are *Acts* of a creature, yet *Faith* derives not this influence from the *Subject*, but from the *Object*; it juſtifies as it apprehends and imbraces *Chriſt*) notwithſtanding both are neceſſary to *Salvation*, Luk. 12. 33. *Sell that ye have, and give alms, provide your ſelves baggs which wax not old, a treaſure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth*; i. e. This treaſure is neither liable to *intrinſick decay*, nor to *extrinſick caſualty*. What other treaſure hath eſcaped

eſcaped danger, but who can ſcale the *Empyrean Heaven?* Theſe the *Apoſtle* calls a *good foundation*, 1 Tim. 6. 19. *Charge the rich that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate: Laying up in ſtore for themſelves a good foundation againſt the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.* Other riches you lay up for *others*, yea perhaps for ſuch as you *know not*; but by doing all the good you can, you lay up ſomething in ſtore for *your ſelves*. What if the advantage be not at preſent *viſible*, men will lay out money upon a good *Reverſion*, though they never live to injoy it. Here is a *Reverſion* worth the having, *Eternal life*.

Many *uſeful* things may be done in *this life*, which cannot be done by you when this life is ended. Now you may feed the *poor*, cloath the *naked*, redeem the *captive*, incourage *learning*, promote Soul-ſaving *Preaching*, &c. Are you any other than *Gods Stewards?* and poor *Chriſtians*, poor *Tradeſmen*, poor *Scholars*, poor *Miniſters* are *Gods Aſſigns*, to whom he appoints you to do good out of his ſtock in your hand, according to your ability and their neceſſity. You do but

*draw*

*draw Bills* upon *Almighty God* by every good Work, which he will moſt faithfully and fully pay in the Kingdom of Heaven. I omit the Story of *Syneſius*; our bleſſed *Saviour* hath ſaid enough to perſwade us, if we be not *Infidels*, from that *Parable* of the *unjuſt Steward*, Luk. 16. where he thus concludes, *ver.* 9. *Make to your ſelves friends of the Mammon of unrighteouſneſs, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlaſting habitations.* Conſider now before it be too late, what a ſad proſpect it will be for you on your death-bed, to review the *book* of a life, wherein is nothing but *Blots*, tranſgreſſions on the *one* ſide of the *page*; and *Blanks*, omiſſions of good on the *other*.

Bethink your ſelves therefore, which way you may yet do ſome good in the world. Do not *live*, do not *dye* to your ſelves: poor *Chriſt* in his *members* begs of you to remember him. Oblige him here in the *Countrey*, and he will befriend you at the *Court*. *Whilſt you have opportunity, do good unto all, eſpecially to the houſhold of faith*, Gal. 6. 10. your opportunity will ſhortly be over and paſt; yet you have *ſomething* to give, and *ſome body* to give unto: but if you

*refuſe* or *delay* it, ſhortly you will have *nothing* to give, *no body* to relieve. And remember *Gods* Counſel, 2 *Cor.* 9. 6. *He which ſoweth ſparingly, ſhall reap ſparingly; and he which ſoweth bountifully, ſhall reap bountifully.* I urge you not, to *undoe* your ſelves by *doing good* to others; but that ye be *ready*, *willing*, and *rich* in good works, according to the *talents* wherewith you are intruſted. And this will be a good *Proof* that your *Faith* is ſound, when you can part with *preſent* and *viſible* things, upon the word and promiſe of an *Inviſible God*, for future things which are unſeen.

And, if the *circumſtances* of your *Eſtate* will bear it, let me prevail with you to make your *own Eyes* your *Overſeers*, and your *own hands* your *Executors*. For though I would not diſcourage any one from making pious or charitable Bequeſts in their *Wills*, by bewailing the *uncertainty*, the *abuſe*, and *loſs* of ſuch intentions: But the thing it ſelf is no way ſo *laudable*, or *acceptable*; only to *part* with what we cannot *keep*: it inſinuates, that if we could *alwayes live*, we would *never part* with any thing; whereby there is neither that *Faith*, nor that *Charity* exerciſed which becomes a *Chriſtian*.

*With-*

*Withhold not good from them to whom it is due: mark, it is due* to them, *when it is in the power of thine hand to do it*, Prov. 3. 27. You are juſt ready to travel into *another Countrey*, take care to ſend ſomething *before you*, leſt you loſe both *Earth* and *Heaven* at once.

## SECT. IX.

§. 9. Meditation on Death and Eternity.

THE *Ninth Work* of *Old-age* is *Meditation of Death* and *Eternity*. *Meditation* in general is the application of our thoughts to ſome particular Subject: which being imployed about things *Holy*, becomes one of the parts of *Inward Religion*. A moſt excellent and uſeful exerciſe, and which greatly inriches the Soul[i]. It was a clear proof of the great ſanctity of *Davids* heart, that he was ſo *frequent* and *familiar* in this imployment; ſometimes on *God*, ſometimes on his *Word*, ſometimes on his *Works*, both of *Creation* and of *Providence*, &c. O that we all had the *Art* of it, the *Heart* of it, for the *heart is all*. Doubtleſs if our *Love* were *ſtronger*, our *meditation* would be *longer*

[i] Μελέτη τὸ πᾶν. Periander.

on theſe things, for where the treaſure is, there the heart will dwell alſo. I know ſome *Conſtitutions* of *body* are more capable of it than others, but certainly the more the ſoul is ſanctified, that is, *mortified* to things below and *vivified* to things above, the more chearfully will it dwell upon ſpiritual things; ſuch as the *Stomach* is, ſuch *food* will it deſire.

But among other uſeful *Points*, The *Aged* is greatly concern'd to *Meditate* on *Death*, and the *endleſs Life* after it; which is, to pencill out before the Eyes of his mind the time of his *Departure*, the ſerious *Circumſtances* and *Conſequences* of it. We ſhould place our ſelves upon our *Death-beds*, gaſping there for breath, our Friends ready to cloſe our Eyes, the dabbe of flegme ready to ſtop our breath, and our Souls juſt forſaking the poor carkaſs. When we look upon our *hands* and *feet*, it ſhould be attended with theſe thoughts, that ſhortly they will be turn'd to *rottenneſs*; that the worms will make furrows in our faces, and feed upon our *very hearts*; yea that we at preſent do breed and nouriſh the *vermine*, that wait for to devour us: that e're long we ſhall have nothing

nothing to do here, our houſe and goods in the poſſeſſion of thoſe that would be *affrighted* to ſee us again: that we muſt lodge a long time in the *dark grave*, and the Soul muſt go into an unknown world, and that unto all *Eternity*. Theſe are thoughts for *Aged* perſons; and not to be roving about things *paſt* to no purpoſe, or contriving about things of this world *to come*. This is in ſome ſence to *dy daily*, to wit, by ſerious thoughts concerning *our latter end*.

The truth is, this is a *duty* incumbent *upon all*. Hence that ſaying, *Deut.* 32. 29. *O that they were wiſe, that they underſtood this, that they would conſider their latter end.* A *Deaths-head* is no unfit furniture, for a *young* perſons *cloſet* [k]. The ſerious apprehenſions of the exceeding great change, which *Death* will make, would give a check to that *wantonneſs*, *worldlineſs* and *vain-glory*, which cleaves to us all by nature. For *Death* obſerves not our humane order, it is *anomalous*, we are not called according to our *Age*; it proceeds not according to our *Regiſters* [l]. Your conſidering of *Death* will not make you *Older* but *Better*. But principally it concerns

[k] *Vivere totâ vitâ diſcendum eſt, & quod magis fortaſſe miraberis totâ vitâ diſcendum eſt mori.* Sen. *de br. vit.* c. 7.

[l] *Non citamur ex cenſu.* Sen. *ep.* 12.

cerns the *Aged*, who live in the *confines* of the *grave*. You ſhould be acquainted with it, for you are *neighbours* to it. It is one of the *Spaniſh Proverbs*, *That the Old mans Staff is the Rapper at Deaths-door*. When *Cato* would awaken the *Roman Senate* to level *Carthage*, he brought in ſome *green figs* thence among them, thereby to ſhew unto them, how ſoon thoſe their inveterate *Enemies*, their diſtance being ſo ſmall, might be with a *Fleet* among them; alas! how ſmall is the diſtance between an *Old man* and his *grave!* Is it not *reaſonable* therefore, is it not *neceſſary*, that we ſhould be provided for this *enemy*? and ſince we cannot *eſcape* it, ought we not to be *reconciled* to it, to be better *acquainted* with it, yea and learn ſome way to *overcome* it. And certainly the more we rightly think of it, the leſs we ſhall *fear* it or be *hurt* by it[m]. We muſt *drink this Cup*, and therefore it is all the reaſon in the world, that we ſhould take ſome *foretaſts* of it, eſpecially conſidering the *ſequele* of it: that it ſets us on an everlaſting ſhore. It's time for *Old* people to bethink them well, ſith a *Crown* or *Flames* are juſt before them: When you ſit *trimming the fire* ponder this,

[m] *Non mortem times ſed cogitationem mortis. — Tu tamen ut nunquam timeas, ſemper cogita.* Sen. ep. 30.

this, whether you can indure the *fire* that is *unquenchable*; when you lift up thoſe dazled eyes towards *Heaven*, conſider what *title* you have to the bleſſed *Manſions* there. What have you to do below? your traffick now ſhould be in *Inviſibles*; you have ſtudied long enough *how to live*, at length you ſhould ſtudy *how to dy*.

Theſe *Meditations* are certainly of great *Excellence*, and of great *Uſe*. *Better it is to go to the houſe of mourning, than to go to the houſe of feaſting, for that is the end of all men, and the living will lay it to his heart*, Eccl. 7. 2. 'Tis more *pleaſant* indeed to go to the houſe of *feaſting*, how gladly do people go that way? but it is *better* to go to the houſe of *mourning*, for there we ſee what is *the end of all men*, and ſo the *living will lay* ſomething that's uſeful *to his heart*. Theſe thoughts will quicken any rational man to do and get all the good he can, while he is on this ſide the *line of Eternity*. The leſs a poor *Old* creature can do about the affairs of this life, the more he ſhould endeavour to do about that better life. Theſe preſentiating thoughts of *Death* will make us careful and conſcionable in all our wayes,

as ſeeing that *Change* alwayes at hand. I write this Letter, ſaith *Seneca*[n], with ſuch a mind, as if Death were to call me away, before I have done: and being ready to go, the leſs I value Life, the more comfortably I enjoy it. For, as the ſame *Authour*[o] ſaith in another place; Theirs is the moſt anxious life, that *forget* what's paſt, *neglect* what's preſent, and are *afraid* of what's to come. For certainly they that forget their *paſt ſins*, and neglect their *preſent duty*, have cauſe to *fear their reckoning to come*. As on the the other ſide, he that, having an inlightned and ſenſible Conſcience, can think of *Death* without diſturbance, hath made a good *progreſs* in Religion.

And yet if *Death*, were only the *finiſhing of Life*, theſe *Thoughts* about it were not ſo neceſſary or conſiderable: but we are aſſured of an *Everlaſting Life* immediately following; that the extremeſt *happineſs* or *miſery* commences thereupon, which alſo *never ends*. Now what *Thoughts* or *cares* can be ſo momentous, as thoſe about our endleſs *Glory* or *Torment*?

Sit

n *Hoc animo tibi hanc Epiſtolam ſcribo, tanquam cum maxime ſcribentem mors evocatura ſit. Paratus exire ſum & ideo fruor vitâ, quia quamdiu futurum hoc ſit, minime pendo.* Sen. *ep.* 61.

o *Illorum brevisſima & ſolicitiſſima ætas eſt, qui præteritorum obliviſcuntur, præſentia negligunt, de futuro timent.* Id. *de br. vit. c.* 15.

Sit down then, compoſe your ſelves to this *Meditation*; draw a Curtain over all this preſent World and your Concerns therein, and open a window into *Eternity*, and by *Faith* look ſteadily into it. Look *Upward* firſt, and ſurvey thoſe bleſſed Manſions, that glorious *Company*, the ſweet *Imployment*, the unconceivable *Injoyment*, the tranſcendent *Bliſs* of *Body* and *Soul* in the full Fruition of *God* to all Eternity. And will not theſe *Meditations nullifie* all the faint and fading comforts of this Life? will they not cauſe you to trample under foot the Pleaſures of ſin, that are but *for a ſeaſon?* will they not eaſily wean you from your deareſt *Relations* upon Earth? will they not carry you with longing deſires to injoy the *beatifical Viſion?* will you not cry out with *Auguſtine*, *Can no man ſee thy face and live? O let me dy then, to ſee thy face!*

Again, look *Downward* into that *Bottomleſs Pit*, and by *faith* behold the deſperate condition of the *Damned*: lay your Ear to the Key-hole of *Hell*, and hearken a while to the weeping, wailing and gnaſhing of teeth there. Conſider the torments of a roaring *Conſcience*, the fury of exaſperated *Devils*, the unſpeakable

able racks and tortures of wofull *Bodies*, which muſt be as much beyond what the moſt cruel Malice can invent or act, as the Almighty and juſt indignation of *God* exceeds the weak and finite wrath of Man: And theſe to continue during the innumerable ſpaces of an unconceivable *Eternity*; and the *Aged* man muſt conclude, that there is no other way for him to take at *Death*, but into one of theſe *Receptacles:* and that he may juſtly expect by reaſon of his *Age* very ſhortly to determine this point, that he is even *at the door*; that he hangs over this Eternity by a ſlender twiſt, which is now almoſt *fretted* through, and that before a few weeks or days are come, he muſt go *the way whence he ſhall not return.* What agitations of heart would theſe *Meditations* produce in us? what diligence in making our Calling and Election ſure? what contempt of all the World? what deteſtation of the ſweeteſt ſins? In ſhort, the *Thoughts* of *Eternity* would effectually diſgrace the *trifles of Time*, and prepare the *Aged* for the injoyment of it.

How comes it then to paſs, that we are ſo *backward* to the thoughts of *Death* and the World to come? The truth is, it

it is not gratefull to Fleſh and Blood. Hence, when *thouſands* died in the Wilderneſs, which ſhould probably of it ſelf have made impreſſions on the reſt, yet then *Moſes* finds it needfull to beg of God, *Pſal.* 90. 12. *So teach us to number our dayes, that we may apply our hearts to wiſdom.* Alas! we find that we can think on any *Perſon* in the world rather than of *God*, and of any *Thing* in the world rather than of our *Soul*, and of any part of our *Lives* rather than of *Death*, and of any *place* in the world rather than of *Heaven*. But ſhould *Fleſh and Blood* be gratified, rather than our *Maker*, our *Redeemer*, our *Comforter*, our own *Souls*? *God* forbid. How many *unpleaſant doſes* do we take, to preſerve or recover the *health* of the *body*? But here the health and happineſs both of *body* and *ſoul* are concerned. I may boldly ſay, that *Death* will prove a bitter Cup to thoſe that *live at eaſe*, and that will make no acquaintance with it, before it ſeize upon them. We are ſurpriz'd with any thing that is altogether *new*, but frequent *converſe* maketh the moſt fearfull Objects familiar. Walk then into the place of *Skulls*; make room for your *Coffin* in your *Chambers* or in your *Minds*, and

and call before you all the solemn Circumstances of your own *Funerals*, and step now and then into the *other world* by holy *Meditation*. Your natural *Eye* growes dim, open then the Eye of *Faith*, and penetrate into things unseen. You cannot *work*, but you can *think*; your *sleeps* are broken, but then you may have *golden hours*: When you have various discomforts *below*, you may have hereby unspeakable comfort *above*; yea this will *inure* you unto, and *begin* that blessed life which you hope to live for ever. He that thus *travels* often to Heaven while he lives, will more certainly and comfortably be *lodged* there for ever, when he dies.

## SECT. X.

§.10. Perseverance to the end.

THE *Tenth* and *last Work* of *Old-age*, is *Perseverance to the End*, and that, 1. In *doing*: 2. In *suffering* the will of God. 1. In *Active Obedience*. You must never be *weary of well-doing*, nor imagine that your *work* is done, till your *life* is done. It was an evil Servant, that because his *Lord delayed his coming*, fell

to

*to ſmite his fellow-ſervants, and to eat and drink with the drunken,* Matt. 24. 48. Alas! there are many points of your duty, which you have formerly *Omitted,* and there are other which you have done by the *halves*, and *ſpoiled* them in your performing of them. You had need therefore to be as buſie as ever you can, to correct the *Errata*'s in the large *book* of your Lives. You ſhould think, that there be many Perſons who were born *after you,* who have got the ſtart of *you* in *Knowledge*, *Holineſs* and *Charity*, and therefore you had need to crowd as much work into your narrow time, as you can. If your Principles be ſound, you will be *ſome way* fruitfull to the laſt. *The righteous man will hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands will be ſtronger and ſtronger,* Job 17. 9. It's *Elementary fire* that's apt to go out, the *celeſtial fire* is never quenched. If you had but one grain of the right *Muſtard-ſeed,* it will grow to be a *great tree. The path of the juſt is like the ſhining light, that ſhineth more and more to the perfect day. Prov.* 4. 18. O labour to croſs that uncharitable *Proverb, A young Saint, and an old Devil*[P]: rather, he that is a *Saint* when he is *young*, ſhould be an *Angel* when

[P] *Juvenis in ſanctis ſenibus ſatanizat in annis.*

when he is *old*. The nearer any thing comes to its center, the faſter it moves; ſo the nearer we approach *perfection*, the more we ſhould *hunger* after it and *labour* for it. No man approached nearer unto *God* than *Moſes*, and no man made ſo *ambitious* a ſuit, that he might draw nearer to him. *And the Lord ſaid unto Moſes, thou haſt found grace in my ſight, and I know thee by name. And he ſaid, I beſeech thee, ſhew me thy Glory*, Exod. 33. 17, 18. It was a complaint of old, that few people were ſolicitous *how well*, but only *how long* they ſhould live: when as a good life might be attained by *many*, a long life only by a *few* q. But our buſineſs ſhould be to live *well*, and referr it to the wiſe God to determine how *long*. It is ſaid, *Iſa.* 65. 20. *There ſhall not be an old man that hath not filled his dayes*: Its true, that ſignifies, all the *Aged* ſhall compleat their time, they ſhall fall ripe into their graves: But then it ſhould follow, that if *God* in his goodneſs pleaſe to *fill up* the dayes of the *Aged*, ſurely they alſo ſhould *fill their dayes* with ſome good ſervice or other.

q *Nemo quam benè vivat ſed quamdiu, curat: cum omnibus poſſit contingere, ut bene vivant; ut diu, nulli.* Sen. *ep.* 22.

Hold out then to *run with patience the race that is ſet before you*. He that ſits down

down within ſight of the goal, loſeth the race, and ſo loſeth the *things that he hath wrought: Si dixiſti, ſufficit, periſti.* He that concludes, I have believed or obeyed *ſufficiently*, is a loſt man. *The hoary head muſt be ſtill found in the way of righteouſneſs*, Prov. 16. 31. If our *face* be withered, yet we muſt take care that our *faith* be not withered. We ſhould make it appear, that our *ſpiritual heat* or zeal did not reſult only from our *natural heat* and vigour. To ſee a *young man wiſe*, and an *Old man zealous* are moſt grateful objects to *God* and man. They are thoſe *that by patient continuance in well doing, ſeek for glory and honour and immortality*, that ſhall obtain *eternal life*, Rom. 2. 7.

And here let all *Aged* perſons beware of the *Rock* of *Carnal Security* and *Preſumption*. *Some* of thoſe that have lived long, are prone to rely upon their very *Age* as an Argument of Gods favour: Whereas *Old-age* will ſave no man. It may be a *means* of Salvation in a large ſence, in affording you *Space* of Repentance: And it will be an *aggravation* of your impenitence, in caſe you have ſuch *ſpace*, and yet not *grace* to repent: But otherwiſe it can make no argu-

argument for your ſalvation; for *God* hath ſaid, *that the ſinner being an hundred years old ſhall be accurſed*, Iſa. 65. 20.

And *Others* that have been ſerious and ſerviceable in their dayes, may perhaps preſume upon what they *have been* or *have done*, as if they might be *juſtified* thereby; or elſe that they need to take no further pains about their own Salvation or others good; whereas in *the morning* we muſt *ſow our ſeed*, and not *withhold our hand in the evening*; *for we know not whether ſhall proſper, either this or that*; *or whether they both ſhall be alike good*: Which S. *Hierom* applies to this matter; Say not, ſaith he, I have been diligent while I was able; I may reſt my ſelf in mine *Old-age*; for thou knoweſt not, whether ſhall more pleaſe and honour *God* in thy Youth, or in thine Age[r]. Thus we read that when *Old Mr. Knox* was dying, he was aſſaulted with this proud Engine, what Service he had done his Maſter, which he preſently repelled with that of the *Apoſtle*, 1 *Cor.* 4. 7. *Who maketh thee to differ, and what haſt thou that thou didſt not receive?* And the ſame *Apoſtle* had ſaid a little before, *ver.* 4. *I know nothing by my ſelf, yet am I not hereby juſtified.* Alas! *all* our *righteouſ-*

r *Hier.* in Eccl. 11.

*righteousness* will not cover *one* of our *Sins*. We must say without a complement, *we are unprofitable Servants*, when we have done our best. Neither may we imagine that any our former *diligence*, will excuse our future *negligence*. As long as we live we must *not live to our selves*[s], but we ought to *live unto the Lord*, Rom. 14. 7, 8. The *ancient Servant* cannot do so much as he hath done, but he oversees affairs, he directs others in their imployments, his head is full of cares about his *Masters* business, and therein he dies and so must we. No man must think, saith *Seneca*[t], that because of his gray hairs only or wrinkles he hath *lived long*; he may have *indured long*, but he hath not *lived*, unless he have *improved* his life. It was the honourable *Epitaph* of *Abraham*, *Gen.* 25. 8. *He died in a good old age, an old man and full* — there is no more in the *Hebrew*, you may adde full of *dayes*, full of *Grace* and *Comfort*, full of *Heaven*. And it was the comfortable incouragement of *Eliphaz* to *Job*, which was truly fulfilled unto him, *Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in, in its season*, Job 5. 26. for he died *old and full*

[s] *Mallem mortuum esse quam non vivere.* Curius Dentatus.

[t] *Non ita dique quod quinquam propter canos aut rugas putas diu vixisse? non ille diu vixit, sed diu fuit.* Sen. de brev. vit. c. 8.

*of dayes*, Job 42. *last*: he had lived as long as he could wish, and had lived to good purpose. He was full of dayes, and his dayes were full of good fruits.

2. The *Other* branch of *Perseverance* is, in *Suffering the will of God*, or in *Passive Obedience*. The Aged person must hold out herein to the end. He *that endureth to the end shall be saved*. Perhaps you will be followed with great distress and *of long continuance*, and *sore sickness and of long continuance*, as is threatned, *Deut.* 28. 59. You cannot reasonably expect, but that at least some bodily distemper will last as *long as your life*, yea peradventure such *painful diseases* as will put all your *patience* to the rout, if the *Lord* be not your *helper*: but yet you must not *murmur*, nay you must not *grudge*, nor *make hast*; but indure the *Lords pleasure*, and wait the *Lords leisure*. *I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it*. The sight of the *haven* animates the weather-beaten *mariner*. *Hitherto the Lord hath helped* you, and *as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him*. He that hath put that compassion into the heart of a *father*, hath a surpassing infinite *Ocean* of it in himself[u]; and

[u] *Tam pater nemo, tam pius nemo*, Tert. *de pæn.* c. 8.

and withal *he knows our frame, he remembers that we are but dust*, Psal. 103. 13, 14. He that hath the *wisdom* and *power* of a *God*, and the *pity* of a *father*, will be sure to lay no more upon you, than he will inable you to bear and to overcome.

And therefore the *Aged* must beware of the *other Extream*, namely, the *Gulf* of *Despondence*, and *Dejection of Spirit*. Their *Sins* are mustered up against them, their outward *strength* is decayed, their *Spirits* broken with a succession of cares and troubles, their *distempers* and pains are heavy upon them, their *friends* and relations seem to be weary of them, and an unperswadable *Enemy Death* stands just before them. And what flesh alive can bear up under such and so many weights together! But besides what hath been offered before, I adde, that as all these *Mortifications* are needful to *wean* us from this world, from the love whereof even these can hardly divorce us; so all such *Discomforts* should drive the *Aged* person no lower than his *knees*, even unto *God* who hath said, *Be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee, yea I will help thee, yea I will uphold thee with the right hand*

*of my righteouſneſs*, Iſa. 41. 10. Have not all the *Saints* and Servants of God that have lived to *Old-age*, paſs'd theſe pikes before you? have they not *born* theſe burdens, that you *ſink* under. There *is no temptation befaln you*, but *what is common to men*. Where is the *faith*, where are the *prayers* that you have been laying up for ſuch a time? O miſerable *Old-man*, ſaid the *Heathen Orator*, that in ſo long a life, haſt not yet learned to deſpiſe *Death*; which is not at all to be *feared*, if it extinguiſh the Soul; and greatly to be *deſired*, if it convey the Soul into an everlaſting good condition[w]. And then for the pain in *Death*, the ſame *Author* tells us, that if there be any ſenſe of pain *in dying*, it is but very ſhort; eſpecially to *Old people*, that have prevented it and taſted it by degrees. And therefore never render your life or death unquiet as many do, that *even dye for fear of dying*, that create by their melancholy fancies greater torments to themſelves, than *Death* brings with it. Behold it through the glaſs of *Gods word*, which repreſents it only as a *Diſſolution*, to wit, out of a priſon to *go to Chriſt*, Phil. 1. 23. *Going to reſt*, Iſa. 57. 2. *Finiſhing our courſe*, 2 *Tim.*

[w] *O miſerum ſenem qui mortem contemnendam eſſe in tam longa ætate non vidérit! quæ aut planè negligenda eſt, ſi omnino extinguit animum, aut etiam appetenda ſi aliquò eum deducit, ubi ſit futurus æternus. Atqui certè nihil tertium inveniri poteſt.* Cicero.

2 *Tim.* 4.8. *Falling asleep in Jesus*, 1 Thes. 4. 14. and a stepping out of this world *unto our father*, Joh. 13. 1. and why should the prospect hereof at all deject us? Yea, in case you should have the *honour* to be called to suffer *Death* for *Christ*, and his *Truth*; yet fear it not under its most *terrible Aspect*; for the *Supports* and *Comforts* of that *Trial* will ballance, yea surmount the *fears* and *pains* thereof. *As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ*, 2 Cor. 1. 5. Strive therefore rather to *adorn*, than to *avoid* the Cross: considering that, as it is a great honour for you in your *Old-age* to *suffer for the Truth*[x], so it is a great shame, that the *Truth* should *suffer by you*. It was the worthy Resolution of *Old Eleazar*, when he was urged to counterfeit the eating of *Swines flesh*, to save his life: "No, saith he, it becometh not our Age in any wise to dissemble, whereby many young persons might think, that *Eleazar* being "*fourscore and ten*, were now gone to "a strange Religion. —— And so they "through my hypocrisie and desire to "live a little time, should be deceived "by me, and I get a stain to my Old-"age,

x *Bona senectus non vitæ longævitate imbecillæ adusum; sed maturitas virtutis ad martyrium præparata.* Ambr. *in Luc.* l. 10.

"age, and make it abominable. Where-
"fore now manfully changing this life,
"I will ſhew my ſelf ſuch an one as
"mine Age requireth. So *Polycarp*,
when he was tempted to deny Chriſt,
and to ſwear by the *Fortune of Cæſar*,
anſwered; "*Fourſcore and ſix* years have
"I ſerved *Chriſt*, and have found him
"a good Maſter, and ſhould I now de-
"ny him? I have lived by him, and I
"will live and dye to him. Let us
reſolve, by *Gods* grace, to write after
theſe Copies. Doubtleſs, if there be
any going to Heaven on horſe-back, as
Mr. *Bradford* ſtyles it, that is, in Ho-
nour and State, it is by Martyrdom.

Nay, it is not enough, that we be *con-
tent* and *quiet* under theſe *diſcouragements*,
that we who have *received good at the
hands of the Lord*, be *content with evil
alſo*: but we ſhould *triumph* over them.
In *all theſe things we ſhould be more than
conquerours through him that loved us.*
Our rooted *Faith*, our fixed *Hope*, our
long *Experience* ſhould lift us up to ſur-
mount all theſe fears and troubles. The
veterane *Soldier* muſt not be ſcared with
ſuch *Hydra's*. We are near the promi-
ſed Land, the news of theſe *Anakims* in
our way ſhould not affright us, they
are

are *bread for us*, as *Joshua* said. When these things come upon you, then *look up and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh*[y]. Be *faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life*, Rev. 2. 10.

And thus we are at length arrived at the end of the *Aged* persons *Work*, which was the *Seventh* and *Last* thing to be treated of in this *Subject*.

The *Practice* of these things now only remains: That we study to *correct* the *Causes*, *avoid* the *Sins*, *obtain* the *Graces*, *sustain* the *Inconveniences*, *improve* the *Priviledges*, and *dispatch* the *Work* described before us. Wherein we must earnestly implore the gracious *Assistance of God*, who *worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure*, and who will not fail us therein, unless we be wanting to our selves.

And O that all *Younger* people would learn *Knowledge*, *Temperance*, and *Industry*[z] in their youth, which will be the only means to attain to an *Healthy*, *Wealthy*, and *Holy Old-age*.

y *Neque enim poterit nisi & lætus & gratus semper esse, qui cum morti fuisset obnoxius, factus est de immortalitate securus.* Cypr.

z There is scarce any *old man*, but then sees how he might formerly have improved his talents better. Dr. *Sheaf* his Vind. of *Old-age*.

FINIS.

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